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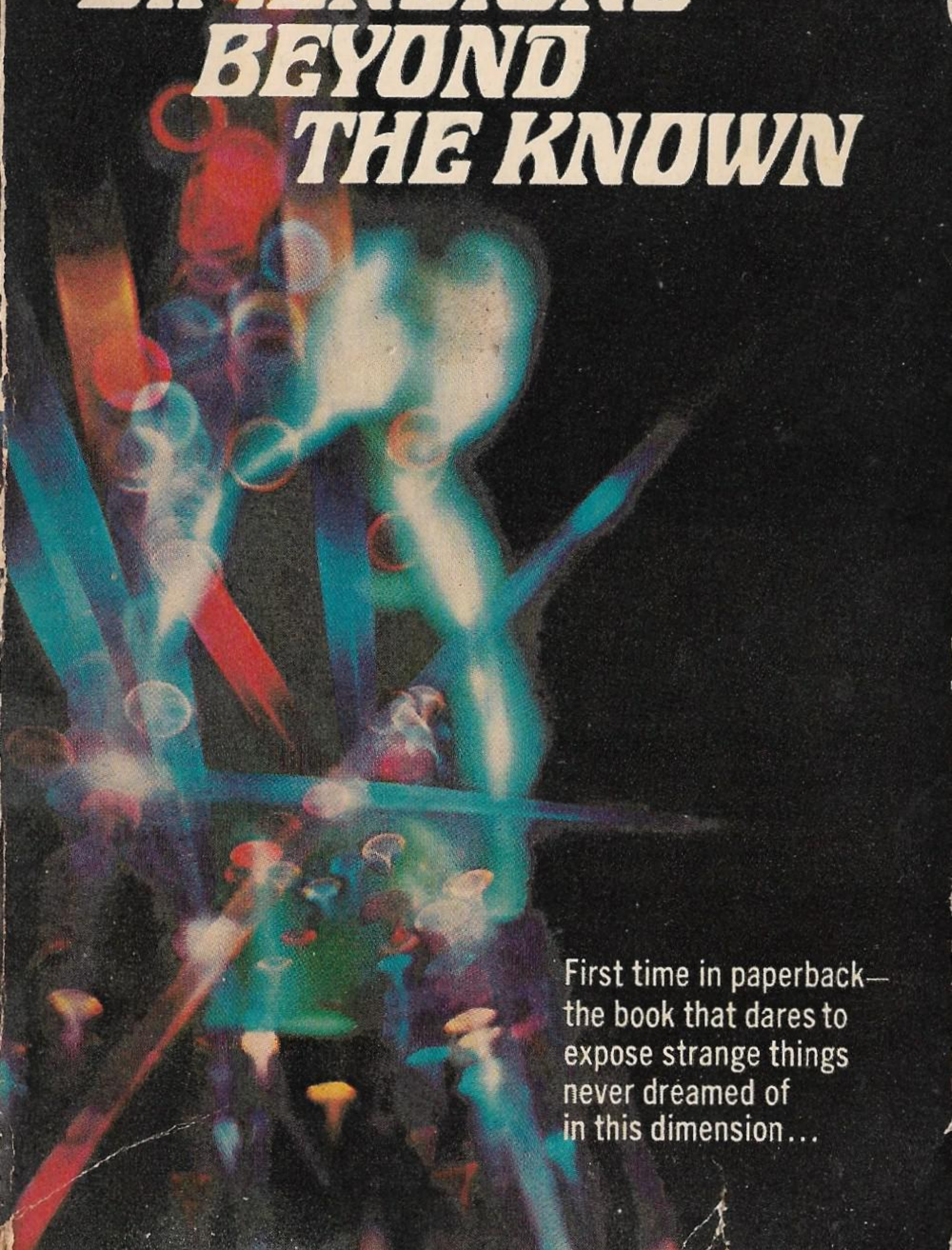
DIMENSIONS BEYOND THE KNOWN



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JOHN MACKLIN

DIMENSIONS BEYOND THE KNOWN

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THE SINISTER SANDS OF CULBIN

The damp mists sweeping in from the North Sea awoke Bill Macintosh late one July afternoon in 1955, and he realized that he'd been dozing for far longer than he had expected. Long evening shadows were by then creeping swiftly across the dunes of Culbin Sands, in Morayshire, and the sun which had been so warm during the day had long since disappeared.

Macintosh wondered what had happened to his wife and family, so he rose stiffly to his feet, stretched himself and looked along the beach. It was then that he became aware how still everything was, and how sinister the empty beaches had become.

There wasn't a soul to be seen anywhere. There was no sign of his wife, or his three children. Yet when he'd gone to sleep they'd all been bathing happily and noisily in the sea or running across the beach.

Their excited screams and laughter, their familiar voices, had been the last thing he'd heard before nodding off to sleep in the sun. Bill Macintosh had no way of knowing that was to be the last time he would ever hear them . . . or see them.

His anxious shout rang out across the sands, then died away into an echo. For a moment, he thought he heard a reply, but it was only the distant mewing of a seagull wheeling far out across the sea.

Then with the terrible fear that few men have ever experienced, he raced across Culbin Sands. Shouting for his wife and his children, hoping to hear their replies . . . praying that he would see them sitting, waiting for him, behind the next sand dune.

But there was no sign of them anywhere, except for a gaily colored beach ball bobbing sadly by the water's edge,

and a few footmarks to show where they had walked across the firm wet sand into the dunes.

The sinister, shifting killer Culbin Sands had claimed four more victims—for they had disappeared without a trace.

The Sands present a tempting picture to anybody looking for a quiet beach spot for a picnic, because there are never any other people in sight. The locals avoid the place completely; they hardly ever even discuss its existence, and it's so remote that few strangers ever find their way there.

And it is just as well. For these peaceful looking sand dunes become killers without any warning, when a sudden change in wind direction starts the dunes moving with a deceptive slowness.

Then suddenly it's like a glimpse into Hell as the sand whips itself into a frenzy of movement, sliding and slithering relentlessly all over the place, completely covering everything in sight, within a matter of hours—or even minutes—killing cattle, smothering trees and burying people alive.

The winds drop, the sands settle and Culbin becomes as peaceful and pleasant as any other beach, for it hides its treachery well by wiping out all the evidence.

About 300 years ago, Culbin was a pleasantly prosperous and fertile area with farms, fields, live stock, a village, a church and a castle. In August, 1676, the Laird of Kinnard had every reason to feel pleased with himself, for his 20 farms had done very well that year.

One evening he gave a pre-harvest celebration for all his employees. During the height of the festivities a ragged gypsy came walking over the Sands towards the Castle hall where the dancing and feasting was being held. He strode past the fat cattle, the heavy crops of wheat and barley, and the comfortable cottages.

But when he tried to join in the merrymaking, the farmworkers threw him bodily out into the night. There was no room for him there, they laughed; the feast was only for those who worked for a living, and for those who were going to gather in the harvest in the morning.

Picking himself up from the ground, the gypsy stared

back at them for a long moment, and deliberately spat at their feet. His face was twisted with fury by their insults. "It's one harvest that will *never* be gathered," he said. Then he hurried off through the darkness, back towards the dunes.

That night the wind began to blow in from the sea. It gathered in force until it was rippling over the sands, whispering to them until they started to stir like living creatures. Then, rustling restlessly, the sand began to creep nearer and nearer the fields. . . .

Soon the wind was sending the sand screaming in over the land like a blizzard. It piled high over the fields, flattening the crops, choking the cattle and smothering the houses.

Ten thousand acres of the most fertile farming land in Scotland completely disappeared in less than two days. The crops, cattle, farmhouses, village, church and castle all vanished.

So did many of the people, and those who escaped blamed the gypsy's curse. He was never seen again, and some said he came from the Sands itself, and that was where he perished.

Today there is one gigantic sand dune, more than 200 feet high, which is believed to have buried the castle. Occasionally the winds have been known to uncover relics of the life that was once lived there three centuries earlier. Sometimes, the sand retreats slightly, to reveal the bleached skeleton of man or animal, a piece of furniture, the remains of a wagon, or the stones from a house.

Two years ago, a group of forestry workers, who were there on a project to reclaim the sands by planting young trees, discovered a cottage standing between two sand dunes. Inside, it was as if the owners had only left it a few moments earlier.

The kitchen table was laid out for a meal, cooking pots were hanging by the fireplace and some children's toys were strewn about the floor. And apart from the sand which was everywhere, the cottage could have been suitable for immediate occupation.

The foresters hurried back to their headquarters near Elgin to report their discovery, but by the time they led an official party of investigators back to the spot the cottage had disappeared again.

Nobody knows what brought the killer sands to Culbin, or why they started. Was it the gypsy's curse? If not, then why should they suddenly have risen to wipe out a centuries-old community?

A great many people have disappeared there in the past 300 years, but some day, it is believed, the winds will suck back the sand again, to expose the fields, the cattle, the farmhouses, village, church and castle—as well as the bodies of Bill Macintosh's wife and children—and the countless others who have been killed by the most sinister sands in the world.

HORROR BEHIND THE BLACK VELVET MASK

A gale-force wind was rushing in from the North Sea, howling across the flat Norfolk marshlands and whipping the thick, fast falling snowflakes into a blizzard. It was Christmas Eve, 1902, and it certainly wasn't pleasant weather to be out in . . . unless you were up to no good.

Jim Mace, was a poacher, so to him and his friend Arthur Briggs, the blizzard provided an excellent opportunity to plunder the pheasant breeding grounds in the local woods; there was hardly likely to be a gamekeeper prowling about on such a night.

Jim and Arthur hadn't really wanted to go out either, but the whole thing had started as a joke in the village pub earlier that evening. Both the young men hadn't much money and when that ran out they tried to coax somebody to buy them a drink.

But nobody bothered, so Jim came out with his joke about what a fine night it was to do a bit of poaching up at Breccles Hall. Especially seeing it was Christmas Eve.

Arthur and he tried hard not to grin at the heavy silence that followed. For a moment the only sounds to be

heard were the log fire crackling in the hearth and the wind screaming round the alleyway outside.

Then one of the older men looked at them angrily: "Don't be so bloody daft!" he said. "If you've nothing better to do with your time, push off home."

His words roused Jim's temper, too. "What's wrong—do you think we're scared of a ghost story? Do you think *we're* afraid of the Christmas coach, or something?"

Nobody made any reply to that; it was as if they were all too afraid even to mention the subject. And as nobody seemed to be willing to buy them a drink, the two young poachers stamped out and slammed the door behind them. At first the men in the bar thought they would come back in.

Then somebody rubbed the condensation from a window and peered out through the fast falling snow after Jim Mace and his friend. They were hurrying up the alleyway away from the pub, heading towards Breccles Hall.

And it was to be the last time anybody saw Jim Mace alive.

It certainly proved to be a profitable poaching expedition, for as they suspected, the gamekeepers were all settled cozily in front of their fires. Soon Jim and Arthur had knocked off more than a dozen birds.

Then they found themselves looking across a field at Breccles Hall. At one time, it had been a beautiful, well maintained Jacobean manor house, but in 1901 it stood sombre, brooding and empty. Now the snow had ceased and the manor house stood up bare and black against the white countryside.

Arthur shivered and tugged at Jim's sleeve, urging him to hurry back to the village, for Arthur had heard the tales about the ghost, too.

But Jim was made of sterner stuff, and he just laughed. "Ghosts? Oh, man, you don't believe in them things, do you? It's all a lot of old wives' . . ."

Then he stopped. They listened silently as the distant village church clock boomed out the first strokes of midnight, the chimes ringing clearly across the fields.

"Come on, Jim," whispered Arthur urgently. "You—you know what they say. It's about now that . . ."

Suddenly they heard the sound of horses' hooves thundering up the long driveway leading to the manor house. And before Arthur knew what was happening, Jim Mace was dragging him along with him as he ran towards the desolate, deserted, manor house.

As they reached the house every window suddenly blazed with light. They could hear the sound of an orchestra playing inside and the front door swung slowly open.

Then the coach appeared. It swept around the bend in the drive, drawn by four black stallions, with two footmen clinging to the back, and a coachman dragging at the reins.

It stopped only a few feet away from where the poachers were hiding behind some bushes. "Look, you," Jim said trying to force the frightened Arthur to open his eyes. "Look, do you think there's anything spooky about that? I'll show you whether it's a ghost or not . . ."

And springing forward, Jim reached the coach just as a footman helped a beautifully groomed young woman from the carriage. She was holding a black velvet mask to her face as Jim dashed towards her.

Then Arthur Briggs' curiosity overcame his fear and he looked up to see Jim Mace standing directly before her. Mace said something, the woman hesitated . . . then reluctantly lowered her mask.

Having heard the stories about the ghosts of Breccles Hall for years, Arthur quickly turned his face away. Then he heard a scream—an awful, high-pitched scream that went on and on . . . as if it would never stop. Arthur knew that it was Jim Mace's voice . . . that he had seen the girl's face.

Then Arthur was running off across the fields towards the village as fast as he could. Jim's terrified voice was still ringing in his head—then suddenly it died away.

Arthur looked back. Breccles Hall was in darkness again. There were no lights in the windows, no music and no coach in the driveway. But Arthur didn't stop running until he reached the village and hammered on the vicar's door.

It wasn't until the following morning that any of the villagers could be persuaded to go up to Breccles Hall to look for Jim Mace. And even in broad daylight, they insisted that the vicar and his nephew, a reporter on *The Times*, went with them.

They found Jim Mace all right—but he was dead. His frozen corpse was lying face down in the snow in front of the manor house with both hands still pressed against his face. There were no tracks of coach wheels or horses' hooves anywhere near him.

The only marks were those of Jim himself and Arthur, but when the vicar rolled Jim Mace's body over onto its back there was the light, delicate imprint of a woman's shoe beneath him. Just the one, as if she had stepped back as Jim collapsed in the snow.

There was no doubt that Jim Mace had seen something hideous, something that quite literally frightened him to death. For when his hands were taken from his face, his features were contorted into an expression of agony. And his eyes were wide and staring, as if they had seen something unbelievably hideous and loathsome.

But nobody will ever know what it was he saw behind that mask. At the inquest the pathologist contributed Jim's death to heart failure caused by "an overpowering emotion similar to abject fear."

Then the Coroner, on seeing the look of fear in the corpse's eyes, had the eyes photographed, hoping to see some reflection of the cause of Mace's death. But there was nothing to be seen in the photographs . . . except a dead man's eyes.

THE GRATEFUL CORPSE

It was the Indians who worked for the Hudson Bay Company at Fort Anderson who first began to complain about the ghost of Duncan Mackenzie. They were afraid because his spirit was unhappy; they had seen it standing on the river bank looking towards the east and sobbing in despair.

The company inspector there, a man named John Macfarlane, tried to laugh off the idea, but nevertheless he was worried. For he remembered something that Mackenzie, his former assistant, had told him before his death—that he hadn't wanted to be buried in the wilderness. Mackenzie had wanted to rest in a churchyard.

Unfortunately, when the young man died a few years earlier, in 1880, Macfarlane had been off visiting another trading post. By the time he returned his assistant had been buried in a grave by the banks of the Peel River. So Macfarlane had decided to let him rest in peace.

Then in 1885, when Macfarlane was retiring from the company and clearing out his desk he came across an unopened letter. It had been written by Duncan Mackenzie shortly before his death, asking Macfarlane to beg the company to grant his last wish.

He wanted his body to be shipped back East and buried in consecrated ground.

The nearest suitable place was over 1,000 miles away at Fort Simpson, but Macfarlane decided to grant Mackenzie's last wish and take his remains back with him on his way home.

When the body was exhumed, it was found in much the same condition as on the day of its burial, due mainly to the marshy nature of the ground and the fact that frost always reaches far below the surface of the ground in these parts for many months of the year.

Macfarlane got together three dog-sleds. One for equipment, one for provisions, and the other for the coffin, which was secured by a wrapper and lines.

It was an extremely awkward load for men and dogs to haul over the rugged masses of tossed-up ice which lie all along the mighty MacKenzie River, but this was the route they had to take.

Three men, led by a half-breed trapper, Michel Taylor, brought the dog team as far as Good-Hope. There it was taken in charge by Macfarlane, and two other trappers.

After traveling for two days, the party camped one night beside a lake and kindled a fire, cooked a meal and settled

down for the night. They left the sleds and the coffin down on the ice.

But no sooner had they settled down for the night than they heard coming from the direction of the sleds, a voice shouting: "March! March!" They decided to go down and investigate.

The dogs had become highly excited and were all milling around the coffin, growling and snarling.

Afraid that they had been excited by the smell of the body, Macfarlane ordered that the dogs should be tied up for the night, and this quieted them down. But there was no trace of the man who had been shouting.

A few nights later, they had just started to light a fire, when once more, coming in the direction of the sleds on the ice below them, they heard the shouted words: "March! March!"

Rushing down Macfarlane and the trappers found the dogs again gathered around the coffin whining, clawing it, and peering closely at it. Again, the dogs were tied up beside the tents and nothing more was heard for the rest of the night.

The dog train arrived at Fort Simpson a few days later, and they were given quarters for the night, while arrangements were made to bury Mackenzie's body the next morning.

Macfarlane and one of the trappers, Indian Ross, shared the same room in a sparsely furnished wooden building. The coffin was placed on two wooden trestles in an adjoining shed.

After supper, Macfarlane and Ross retired to their room, where they discussed the strange happenings on the journey to Fort Simpson. Ross was about to go to sleep when he sensed a "spirit" in the room. He covered his face with his blanket, but the sensation persisted. Suddenly Macfarlane cried out excitedly, asking Ross if he had experienced a strange feeling. The Indian replied that he had, describing it, whereupon Macfarlane said that this was exactly what he himself had felt.

Plucking up his courage, Ross lit a candle. No sooner had

he done so than the tall gaunt figure of a youngish looking man walked in through the door. He nodded to Ross.

Then with his hands clasped together, the figure went over to Macfarlane, bowed to him several times as though in gratitude, and walked back out into the darkness.

"Did you see anything?" asked Ross.

"Yes," replied Macfarlane. "I saw Donald Mackenzie come in, nod to you and then walk over here and bow to me."

The two men dressed and went out to the shed next door and stood for a while looking at the coffin, resting on the trestles. Its lid was nailed down as firmly as it had been when it left Peel River. . . .

THE MAN WHO FEARED DOGS

They dragged Carl Heller from his prison cell early one morning in December, 1904. They forced him to kneel at the executioner's block which was placed in the market place in the small hamlet near Brunswick, Lower Saxony.

People had flocked into the village from many miles around to see him die. They all stood in silence as the black masked executioner raised his gleaming, razor-sharp axe . . . then brought it whirling down on Heller's neck.

It was a clean, powerful blow that severed his head from his neck and sent it spinning across the village square for several feet.

Then the silence was suddenly shattered. For every dog in the village, every dog in nearby farms, and even some 20 miles away in the hills, suddenly started to howl. It was a triumphant, gloating unnatural sound that turned everybody's blood cold.

It was also a fitting epitaph to the murderer who had committed an atrocious crime . . . one which was only solved after a series of weird, inexplicable incidents.

Heller was a herdsman on Hagenhof Farm, a large farm near the village. And strangely, for somebody in his job, he had an almost pathological fear of dogs.

But he didn't fear girls, especially the young, 14-year-old

girl who lived on the farm. She wasn't much more than a child . . . when Heller kept trying to seduce her.

But just before the fateful evening when Heller was to kill her, she had threatened to expose him if he persisted in his attempts. Heller had no intention of killing her, but he had with him a large clasp knife with which to frighten the girl should she refuse his demands.

According to Heller's subsequent story, everyone on the farm—except Heller and herself—was busy with the harvest. However, it soon became clear to Heller that he was not going to get his way with her. Had the girl just stopped at resistance, she might have lived. But she started shouting to Heller that she was going to the police . . .

Heller rushed at her and gathered her into his powerful arms. The child still screamed, and Heller grasped his knife and plunged it into her throat.

It was at this point that he fancied he heard a low haunting cry from a dog far away in the hills. But he pulled himself together and looked out into the farmyard. He decided that to cover his misdeed, he would have to call to someone passing as though he had just discovered the girl by chance.

Quickly, he concocted a story that having returned to the farm and found it empty, he had searched around and came upon the girl's body as a result.

Seeing a woman passing in the yard outside, Heller leaned out of the window to call to her. For a moment he froze in terror as plainly and unmistakably he heard the haunting cry of a dog drawing closer. Yet the woman seemed to be quite unaware of it.

Finding his voice at last, Heller called out: "For Heaven's sake, come quickly. Something terrible has happened."

When the woman saw what had happened, she screamed and fainted. Her cry attracted some of the workers who were returning from the fields. Although the house soon filled with silent men and staring women, only Heller seemed to hear the ghostly cry of a pack of hounds.

The police were baffled. It might have been the work of a vagrant or it might have been one of the men on the

farm. But, if one of them, it could be one of several. A blond hair from a moustache or beard had been found on the girl's bed. But all the men on the farm were bearded, and most of them were fair.

The police decided to leave the detective work to their two dogs, never guessing how effective this action was to be.

In the yard of Hagenhof Farm, all the men were lined up. The dogs were taken to the murder room and left there.

In the yard while the men waited, Heller once again heard a cry from a ghostly pack of hounds. And, once again, he seemed to be the only one aware of it.

Then came another cry which scared him more than ever. The two dogs had run howling from the murder room. They came to a halt before Heller and circled around and around him. Heller forced himself to face them and attempt to appear unconcerned.

Then just as a burly policeman was about to call the dogs off, one of them leaped at Heller and bit him. It was too much for him to bear.

"Call him off!" screeched Heller. "I'll confess! I'll confess! For Heaven's sake call him off!"

As suddenly as the dog had attacked, he stopped. Both he and his companion lifted their heads and listened. From the far away hills, came the cry of the ghostly hounds. Then Heller fainted.

MURDER BY PERSONS UNKNOWN—IN THIS WORLD

At first the search party thought the two men lying in the jungle clearing were asleep. But they weren't—and the discovery made on the mountainside 1,000 feet above the bay of Rio de Janeiro in November, 1966, started off the most mysterious and uncanny murder hunt the American continent has ever known.

It is a crime that has never been solved.

For the victims were identified as Miguel Viana and Manuel Pereira. There was nothing at all to connect either

of the men with Brazil's underworld, so gang violence was soon ruled out. They both came from respectable families in the Niterio, the city across the bay from Rio de Janeiro, and they had never been involved in any sort of trouble before.

Both young men had died horrifying deaths. They had been smothered by heavy lead masks which had been placed across their faces.

The masks were so heavy that neither of these young men could have placed them there themselves—it required two policemen to lift them off. And the bodies showed no sign of violence.

Both Pereira and Viana had died in relaxed positions, just like two men who had lain down to rest. But somebody was responsible for placing the masks across their faces.

Postmortems carried out on the bodies proved without any doubt that Viana and Pereira showed no marks of violence. And at the inquest Detective Inspector Ferreira confirmed that, "We found the bodies contained no poisons, bullets, stabs or burns. Everything pointed to the fact that the victims had submitted voluntarily to their ordeal.

"Indeed, the pathologist's report claims that neither Viana nor Pereira needed to die, because by turning their heads aside beneath the masks they could have breathed.

"But it wasn't suicide. At least three other people would have needed to have helped them place the lead covers across their faces. Yet there were no footprints or anything to suggest the presence of others . . ."

The verdict arrived at was death from causes and by persons unknown. For none of the police doctors could say *what* had killed the men. Nobody can say why their hearts stopped beating.

The only clue found was a piece of very old parchment in Pereira's pocket which was covered with strange hieroglyphics. These were examined by University experts from all over America, while copies were sent to European authorities, too.

But apart from agreeing that the strange writing has a

definite pattern suggesting an unknown written language, none of the experts have been able to translate it.

Shortly after that a new theory was suggested, following investigations into the activities of both men before their deaths. They had both been secret but enthusiastic ufologists and strong believers in the existence of other worlds in space.

A diary found in Viana's bedroom recorded the times and dates, as well as the possible routes taken, by unidentified flying objects seen over or near the South American continent. This information linked up with charts and diagrams in Pereira's home on which he had worked out these routes—and showed that each and every one had a common denominator: that hillside on which they died was on the route of each supposed flight.

Also found in Pereira's home were a series of mathematical formulae connected with theories for space travel to and from the planet Mars.

There were also newspaper and magazine clippings about mysterious lights and objects that had been spotted on the surface of the moon around the immediate area of the crater Aristotle.

Other information reached the police—that Viana and Pereira had been studying ancient Indian legends connected with supernatural incidents on that hill; that the dead men had been seeking eye witnesses of the recent spate of UFOs seen locally, and had interviewed some of them.

The case became more and more mysterious, for the more the police investigated the pre-death activities of these men, the more puzzled they became.

It was also found that they had recently been converted to spiritualism and that, after holding planchette seances, they had returned home in great excitement. Viana had openly boasted of being in direct touch with creatures from "other worlds than this."

Pereira had once told his family that he wouldn't be going to their usual holiday resort that summer, as he had other plans. When questioned further, he had laughed evasively and replied: "Well, what's wrong with a package trip to Mars?"

But the strangest thing of all was that on the evening after the two young men had set off for the mountainside "on a hunting trip" a flying saucer *had* been reported by several people along the coast between Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires.

From the times and places mentioned in these reports and the direction the UFO had been taking, it could well have been heading for that mountainside above the bay of Rio.

Even coastal radar networks had spotted something, which was thought to be either a meteorite or a space satellite re-entering the Earth's atmosphere. The sighting nearest to Rio de Janeiro coincided fairly accurately with the approximate time of the double murder.

Did Viana and Pereira finally make contact with the extra-terrestrial creatures they believed in so fervently? Nobody can say. But the police Inspector, Mateus Ferreira, who investigated their deaths has vowed not to give up the investigation until he tracks down the murderers.

"Money and women are the usual causes of murder in Brazil," he says, "but they are both easily ruled out in this case. In fact, there's something very wrong here.

"Who helped to kill these men? *What* killed them? Where did these 80 lb. lead masks come from—how did they get there?"

But after more than a year's work on the case, Ferreira is no further forward than he was in November, 1966. The case still baffles him . . . just as it has everybody else in this world.

THE MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF MARY REESER

Fire was one of man's first friends. He learned to use it at the entrance of his caves to ward off marauding animals . . . then he tamed it to help him do his work.

But from time to time, fire will strike to show that it has secret powers still unknown to us.

One Monday morning in July, 1951, Mrs. Pauline Carpenter, of 1200 Cherry Street Northeast, St. Petersburg, Florida, went to visit her 67-year-old neighbor Mrs. Mary H. Reeser, whom she had last seen the night before.

As she approached Mrs. Reeser's door it was a few minutes past eight. Mrs. Carpenter wanted to give a telegram which the messenger boy hadn't been able to deliver, because Mrs. Reeser didn't answer the door.

That seemed odd to Mrs. Carpenter, for Mrs. Reeser was a light sleeper. Was something wrong, she wondered?

As she touched the doorknob to Mrs. Reeser's apartment, Pauline Carpenter jerked her hand away with a cry of pain, for the brass doorknob was so hot that it scorched her hand!

Frightened, she ran outside and called for help. Some painters working nearby dropped their tools and hurried to her. Together they forced the door to Mrs. Reeser's room, and walked into a gruesome mystery that has never yet been solved.

Although the windows were open, the flat was unbearably hot. And placed near the front window were the charred remains of a big armchair and the equally charred remains of Mrs. Reeser . . .

Police were called, who then called in the fire experts, and finally police pathologists arrived at the scene of the mystery. Their intensive and prolonged investigation uncovered many strange facts. some of which do not coincide with scientific understanding of fire.

It was ascertained that Mrs. Reeser had last been seen alive about nine o'clock on the previous evening, by her son, Dr. Richard Reeser, her neighbor, Mrs. Carpenter, and another friend. They had all said goodnight to her, as she sat in the big easy chair in which she had apparently died.

She had been wearing a rayon nightgown, cloth bedroom slippers, and a light housecoat.

When the painters and the landlady forced their way into her room on that fateful morning, Mrs. Reeser's 170 pounds had been reduced to less than ten pounds of charred material by a fierce heat.

Only her left foot, her shrunken skull, and a few vertebrae were unconsumed by the flames. Of the big arm chair, only the coil springs remained.

But curiously, the room in which Mary Reeser had died showed little effects of the inferno. The walls and curtains were thickly coated with a sooty deposit from a point about four feet above the floor, while a mirror on the wall about ten feet from the chair had cracked from the intense heat.

Twelve feet from the fire, two tall candles had melted and congealed in pink puddles on a dressing table, their wicks lying limply across the metal holders.

The effects of the heat were numerous and plain above that four foot mark . . . but *below* it the fire had left only two marks. Directly beneath the chair there was a small burned spot on the rug. Beside the chair, a plastic electric wall plug had melted, blowing a fuse which stopped the victim's electric clock at 4:20.

The authorities were utterly baffled by the strange death of Mary Reeser. Arson specialist, Edward Davies, an insurance expert, made a thorough investigation and had to admit that he could only say that the victim had died from fire, with no idea what caused it.

The pathologist, Dr. Wilton Korgman, of the University of Pennsylvania, fared no better. He reported: "Never have I seen a skull so shrunken nor a body so completely consumed by heat. This is contrary to normal experience and I regard it as the most amazing thing I have ever seen."

Routine checks ruled out the possibility of lightning—there had been none in St. Petersburg that night.

Could a cigarette have ignited her clothing? Experts pointed out that clothing could not have produced the 2500° F. heat which had been required for such drastic results.

A short circuit? Again the answer was no, for the melting wall socket had blown the fuses *after* the fire had begun. FBI pathologists also checked for signs of gasoline, but they reported that there had been no fluids or chemicals to induce burning.

Unsolved and apparently unsolvable, the strange case of

Mary Reeser dropped from the headlines. One or two newspaper editors recalled similar cases and mentioned them briefly, but the matter was forgotten.

The bedeviled authorities of St. Petersburg felt constrained to make some official statement on which to close the bizarre incident. Months after the tragedy, both the Chief of Police and others signed a statement attributing the fiery death of Mary Reeser to falling asleep with a cigarette in her hand, igniting her clothing.

That convenient hypothesis had already been ruled out by the experts, but it served to close the case awkwardly, but legally. If the experts were baffled, then there was no reason to expect the police officers and others to do any better.

Mary Reeser's strange death has been attributed to spirits, to the mysterious St. Elmo's Fire (a strange kind of electrical discharge occurring in the atmosphere producing exceedingly high temperatures), and to a variety of other causes.

All of them are mystifying, and none has ever been explained.

THE 2,000 YEAR OLD HORSEMAN

One June evening in 1924, archeologist Robert Clay set out to drive back to his home in Salisbury from an archeological site near Bournemouth, Hampshire. Then he saw the horseman. He came galloping out of a beech copse a few yards from where an old Roman road crossed the road Clay was driving along and began to race toward the car.

At first, Clay paid him no attention. But as the horseman seemed intent on coming abreast of the car, Clay stared across at him—and gasped. For the man was no ordinary horseman; his legs and feet were completely bare, and he was wearing a long loose fitting cloak made from fur.

Even at that distance Clay saw that the horse was an unusual one, too. It didn't look like any modern breed; it was too small and stunted, and it had a long tail and mane.

Then as the gap steadily closed Clay saw that the horseman was riding barebacked and clutching the mane with one hand. His other hand was waving threateningly at Clay—and it brandished a crudely made spear!

The surprised archeologist realized with a shock that he was looking at somebody from a dead race. The man was an Ancient Briton.

But before he could stop the car and study the phenomenon any further, both the horse and its rider disappeared right in the middle of a flat piece of meadowland.

Mr. Clay noted the spot where this encounter had taken place and the following morning he stopped to examine the meadow—and discovered a low, round mound, an ancient burial ground he had never before seen.

Clay tried to convince himself that the encounter might have been an hallucination. Then he sought some bush or other object at the spot that might have been "transformed" into a ghostly horseman by a trick of the light—but he failed to do so.

He began to make inquiries about the district and learned from Mr. Young, a well-known iron craftsman of Ebbesbourne Wake, that the phantom horseman that rode out from the beech copse had been seen by several people, including an old shepherd.

A few years later, Mr. Clay read in a newspaper that his ghost horseman had turned up again. Two girls, who had been cycling from Handley to attend a dance at Canborne one night, had complainted to the police that a man on horseback had followed them across the downs and frightened them so badly that they had fallen from their bicycles and quite badly bruised themselves.

The old shepherd, who had seen the horseman on many occasions, had complained to the police several times over the years about a "madman" who had ridden pellmell through his flocks of sheep, scattering them all over the downs. And on at least three occasions some of the sheep had been injured.

Eventually, on hearing Mr. Clay's report, his description of the ghost as being that of an Ancient Briton, and the

fact that there was also a burial mound nearby, steps were taken to excavate the barrow.

Inside this were found several unique examples of bronze weapons and other primitive tools and necklaces. But in one chamber there was the skeleton of a horse and in the innermost room the remains of some warrior chief.

Since then, the ghost of the warrior and his horse have never been seen again.

THE SPECTER IN CREAKING SHOES

Ruth Jones looked across the darkness of her bedroom at the doorway. There wasn't a sound to be heard in the house except the dripping of the bathroom tap and the slow ticking of her bedside clock.

There wasn't anything moving within the bedroom, but she knew what had wakened her . . . she knew there was *something* waiting beyond the bedroom door.

It was September, 1914, and Ruth, a woman's magazine editor from London, was staying with her brother and his wife in their home—All Saints Vicarage, in Bristol—for a few week's holiday.

She was a well-educated career-girl with a promising future before her in publishing. She had never had any psychic experiences before . . . but she was on the threshold of the most terrifying few weeks of her life.

Ruth Jones had been selected as its victim by a particularly malevolent ghost. And that first evening as she lay huddled in her bed, she found herself watching the doorhandle . . . as it slowly started to turn.

Then just as the door was beginning to open slowly, she sprang from her bed, slammed the door shut and slotted the bolt in place. Suddenly the door was shaken furiously, but it remained firm.

The next thing she heard was somebody walking slowly down the corridor away from her bedroom. There was no doubt that it was a man's heavy foot she heard—and *she could also hear his shoes squeaking.*

Ruth knew that there was no other man in the house but her brother, Arthur, and he never wore squeaky shoes. Believing that there was an intruder in the house she started to scream for help. Her brother rushed from his room, and they made a thorough search of the vicarage. But every door and window was firmly secured and there was no way an intruder could possibly have got into the place.

It was about one-thirty in the morning when Ruth was persuaded to return to her room. She lay awake for a long time with her door bolted, listening to the ghostly creaking footsteps again pacing the landing outside.

That first frightening experience was only the beginning of a period when she was subjected to persistent haunting by the ghost in creaking shoes that kept turning her room doorhandle slowly, late at night.

Then came something even more frightening: one night she awoke, having the same uncanny feeling that there was some presence near her. She saw from the clock at her bedside that it was almost two A.M. Again she saw the handle of the door turning—and then, to her horror, she saw the bolts being drawn *inside her room.*

She screamed hysterically, and her brother and his wife came rushing to investigate only to see the bedroom door hurl open before them. The terrified girl could not have done it and managed to return to her bed in the few seconds before they reached her . . .

Arthur Jones and his wife were by this time as convinced as Ruth, that the vicarage was being haunted.

Then, early one morning, as if the ghost had tired of remaining unseen and anonymous, it suddenly materialized and was seen quite plainly by Ruth Jones. She saw the ghost enter her room, take hold of the bed and shake it. She described the figure she had seen in great detail, for, she said, it had remained in view quite long enough for her to have got such a look at it that she would never again forget what it looked like.

It was a tall, ghostly and shadowy man's figure, she reported. He was wearing "Mr. Pickwick" type clothes and had very bushy side-whiskers.

Although neither Mr. Jones nor his wife actually saw the ghost materialize, they were utterly convinced that his sister's story was true, for they, too, had witnessed strange happenings in the vicarage—things that could not be explained rationally.

Both Arthur and his wife had seen strange lights flickering across walls. And on some occasions, Arthur Jones had been so violently affected by the sudden ghostly attacks he had been literally pushed on to his knees and forcibly held there.

The nightmare nights Ruth Jones experienced at her brother's house didn't afford her much of a rest. She finally "gave up the ghost" and returned to the relative peace and quiet of London. Apparently the ghost gave up too, for after she left Arthur Jones and his wife were never bothered by the specter in the creaky shoes again.

THE ABBESS AND THE CHILD

It is always astonishing to the layman to learn that some ghosts continue to haunt their former earthly surroundings for centuries after their death. There are so many recorded cases of such phantoms, that occult experts believe there must be some powerful reason for this—some cause as yet not known or understood by man.

Thus, like many other occult matters, the phenomena is accepted—as it was by Jack Hulse, a Yorkshire young man, who in 1938 was serving in the RAF. He was a practical young man, with no nonsense about him—but he kept an open mind about occult matters, in which he was interested.

His interest in psychical phenomena, however, did not extend to the stage where he could ever believe that one day he would encounter ghosts himself. Thus, when his strange experience did come, it came as much of a surprise to him as it might have done to anybody who had absolutely no belief at all in occult things.

Jack was stationed near York in Yorkshire at this time and

much of his leisure time he spent in the city of York to which he could travel easily from his base.

Besides being interested, vaguely, in mysteries of an occult nature, Jack was very keen on looking around and studying ancient buildings and the like—anything that had an aura of the past about it held a strong appeal for him—fascinated him—so a lot of his free time, wherever he chanced to be stationed, he spent in seeking out old buildings and the like.

In York, he found plenty of this sort of thing, steeped in history and tradition. He missed nothing in York that was worth a visit, and the day he went to look at Holy Trinity Church, in Micklegate, he felt nothing more than his usual excitement—his mood whenever he was going out on his favorite self-indulgence, to see something with a fascinating history attached to it.

Certainly, as he declared afterwards, there was no prewarning about the fantastic experience that was to come his way that day—no odd feeling of premonition. It was just another free day; nothing more.

When he got to the church he was disappointed to find it shut up, locked, so that he could not go inside. When he looked around to try to find someone who might open it up his luck was no better.

He examined the outside of the church with interest and it was when he was walking around the third wall of the building that he experienced the first feeling of something odd in the air. He tried to shrug off the strange sensation, wondering if he might be getting ill, for he suddenly felt hot and sweaty, and tense inside.

But the feeling passed when he moved around and returned to the spot where he had first entered the churchyard. Here his luck changed and he saw a man in clerical garb walking past the church.

Jack stopped the clergyman and asked if he was connected with the church in any way—and could he help by having the church opened so that he could take a look around inside?

The clergyman was only too happy to oblige him, and taking a key from his pocket he opened a side door.

"You can go in and look around at your leisure," he was invited. "I just have some small business to attend to, then I will come back and if there is anything you would like to ask me concerning the history of the church, I shall be happy to tell you what I can."

When the clergyman had gone on his way Jack did not immediately go inside the church because there was some architectural feature on one of the outside walls that he wanted to take another, closer look at, first. He walked around to the wall where he had felt the weird sensation and the feeling returned, leaving him a bit shaken.

He was even more shaken when he chanced to glance up at one of the church windows—one with four divisions of stained glass. He had been under the impression that there was nobody inside the church, which he knew had been locked until a minute or so ago—but what he saw through that window made him change his mind.

Outside it was broad daylight and quite sunny. Through the stained glass he clearly saw a figure, hooded, and obviously female—he thought she must be a nun—pass the window inside the church. She seemed to be in a hurry as she walked by the window going from north to south.

He began to think that perhaps there had been a door open all the time—although he had walked around and tried them all, and they had all seemed to be locked.

He was about to move away to go inside himself when he saw the figure of the nun again, passing the window inside the church—but this time walking slowly in the opposite direction. And he was surprised to see that now she had a young child with her.

Suddenly he felt, with prickly certainty, that there was something very odd about what he had just seen.

To calm himself and disprove a sudden wild idea that had come into his head, he hurried around to the door and went inside, sure that he would be able to intercept the nun with the child before she could leave the church.

But inside he stopped, transfixed, shock coursing through

him. The interior of the church was completely empty, and still. There was no nun—no child to be seen.

When the clergyman who had let him in returned and found Jack sitting in a pew looking white-faced and stunned, he asked if Jack was feeling ill. Jack told him no, and recounted what he had experienced.

The clergyman became serious. "That must have been the ghost of the Abbess you saw—she has not been seen, to my knowledge, for some time now—but she always appears, first without the child, then with—"

And from the clergyman Jack learned something of the past history of the place—age-old events that had led to the haunting.

He was told how, during the reign of Henry VIII, when the order for the dissolution of monasteries and convents was made, these being a great source of wealth to the king, Thomas Cromwell was put in command of the operation. When Cromwell's soldiers came to plunder the convent which was at that time attached to the church at Micklegate, the Abbess stood up to them bravely, defying them. She told them that they would only enter her convent over her dead body and if they did kill her, then she would haunt them for the rest of their lives—and that her ghost would haunt the defiled convent until a new holy building replaced it.

But she was slaughtered—along with a young child she tried to protect—and she kept her vow to haunt the spot where she died.

THE WRECK OF THE NIGHT EXPRESS

Jim Robson, a railway engine-driver, had proved himself more than a good friend of John Brierley—and had even got the latter a job in the same yard as himself, driving local trains. Jim was the regular driver of the Night Express, a job in 1936 that commanded a certain amount of respect.

And when Jim decided to get married, he did not have to look far to find a best man. John not only helped to make the day a happy one, but he, his wife, and small daughter

had the newly-weds cottage neat and tidy when the couple returned from their honeymoon.

But fate, in matters of the heart, often plays some fickle, tragic tricks with humans. It was, ironically enough, Jim himself who first threw his young wife and friend together.

One night, the four spent a social evening together at John's home, and as both men were due to report for duty at eleven, it was a quiet, but pleasant occasion.

As John had to go to the local station to join his train, he would have had to pass the newly-weds' cottage. But Jim always had to report to the main yard situated some several hundred yards in the opposite direction. So what could have been more natural than for Jim to ask John to see his wife to their cottage.

But John began to get into the habit of calling on Jim's wife for a chat whenever his local train stopped at the station, and as Jim was away from home a great deal because of working on the Night Express, she welcomed this.

Inevitably this friendship developed into something more serious.

Foolishly John carried on visiting her even when she was carrying Jim's child and people began to gossip—and this eventually came to Jim's ears.

Jim was very strict on the question of marital fidelity. He could not believe that his wife and best friend were having an affair—as rumor had it. He tackled John, who did not deny anything.

John asked for, and got his transfer, but not seeing Jim's wife became torture for him and he started to write to her—wild, passionate love-letters. His obsession with the woman completely blinded him to the danger.

John's first premonition of tragedy came when, one dark Saturday night, he saw that there was no light showing in Jim's cottage as there usually was when he drove his train by. He sounded the engine whistle as he had always done—but the cottage remained in darkness.

When he returned from this trip he learned the shocking, tragic news. His friend, Jim, had killed his wife and child and had then committed suicide.

The effect of this upon John was terrible. He grieved terribly and blamed himself entirely for the triple tragedy. And he confided his secret sorrow in another good and trusted friend, his regular fireman on the locomotive.

He found no relief from his mental torment. By some quirk of fate John was promoted to drive the Night Express Jim had formerly driven. But he got no pleasure from this promotion and he carried out his job efficiently, but more like an automaton than a man.

The astounding climax came one night when John was driving the Night Express as usual. He and his fireman carried out their routine drill, checking everything and all was found to be in perfect order.

The trip began and then, as the train was approaching a bend near Jim's former cottage, the frightening, spine-chilling thing happened . . .

It was usual on approaching this bend to reduce speed and as he always did John pulled back the lever to slacken speed. He still could not get out of his habit of leaning from the cab window as they negotiated the bend at quarter-speed, his eyes fixed bleakly on the cottage.

But this night his thoughts were sharply checked when the fireman suddenly yelled, panic-stricken: "Look at the lever!"

Alarmed, John jerked back into the cab and grabbed the regulator lever; even before the warning shout he had felt the valves opening and the engine gathering speed dangerously.

He was horrified to observe that the lever was being pulled open as if by an unseen, ghostly hand. He tried to close the lever and found that he could not budge it. He exerted every ounce of his strength but it was as if he was pulling against another hand—a spectral, unseen hand that held the lever inexorably in the fully-open position!

The fireman, at his desperate shout, joined him and together they put their combined strength to the regulator—but it was all in vain. The ghostly hand was winning the battle.

It was at this tense moment that John muttered words

afterwards recalled by the fireman—words he did not understand at the time: "He swore he'd get his revenge . . . this is it . . . it must be Jim . . . there was nothing wrong with that lever when we started—somebody—something is pulling against us. . . ."

The train was derailed, and the engine and first coach jumped the track. Unknown to John, his wife and his little daughter were in that first coach. . . .

The fireman was thrown clear.

John, his wife, and his child, were the only people on that train to be killed.

The ghost of Jim Robson had had its revenge.

TERROR HIGH ABOVE SAN CRISTOBEL

Three years ago there wasn't a tougher sergeant in the entire Cuban army than Sebastian Perego. For his gallantry in the guerilla campaign with Fidel Castro, Perego had received the highest honors in the land after the revolution.

During the Second World War, he had joined the US Marines and his judo black belt, first-class marksmanship with knives and small arms, and his excellent physique, had won him rapid promotion through the ranks. Then a heroic action in all the Pacific campaigns—including Iwo Jima—won him an American decoration for great valor.

The one thing about Sebastian Perego which everybody had to admit was that he wasn't a coward. The other thing was that he could take care of himself . . . and that there was nothing in this world that he feared.

Yet today there is no trace of the Perego mentioned above, because one day in 1964 he was rushed to a mental institution near Havana, whimpering and quivering with fear. He hasn't stopped sobbing and day after day he cowers in a corner of his hospital room with his hands across his eyes.

The only time he can sleep is under heavy sedation, yet even then his whole body twists and turns as he experiences terrifying nightmares.

Perhaps it is unfortunate that Sebastian was such a tough character, if he had been less brave he wouldn't have survived the weird, horrifying ordeal he experienced—because that night in May, 1964, on the cliff tops above San Cristobel, Sebastian faced up to a nameless terror, and was defeated by a power that certainly did not come from this world.

It happened in one of the most strategically placed lookout posts in Cuba, a crumbling stone-built tower on the cliffs above San Cristobel. Until Perego was posted there in 1963, nobody had gone near the place for 100 years, ever since five soldiers disappeared—one after the other—in mysterious circumstances.

The post was erected in 1859 as one of a chain of watch-towers which were built to protect Cuba against the attacks of pirates, and to watch out for smugglers. Raw material was in short supply, and when the engineers arrived at San Cristobel the cliffs were too steep to drag up stone from the beaches.

However, they discovered a ruined, stone-built temple in the jungle nearby and decided to rebuild that into the watch-tower. But they had to do so themselves, for the Indian laborers ran off one dark night, rather than have anything to do with the job.

As the soldiers removed the temple, stone by stone, the only thing left was a few yards of roughly paved floor around a stone idol. Thinking that there might have been some treasure hidden there, they pulled up the flagstones in front of the idol—and found a vault beneath it.

But it was no treasure they found. Instead the vault was filled with brutally smashed human bones. Not one complete skeleton was found there, for each body had been savagely ripped apart.

A few sticks of dynamite soon took care of the blood-curdling tomb, and they hurried to forget their discovery by building the watch-tower. They tried to forget, too, the foully fetid wind that had roared out past them when they opened the vault—a wind that had howled like all the demons being released from the deepest depths of hell.

A few days after the look-out post was completed, the first sentry moved in shortly before sunset. But when his relief man arrived at dawn, he found his colleague cowering in a corner of the tower, trembling with some strange fear.

Later, when he was questioned about it the first sentry couldn't explain what had happened—except that all night long he had sensed some "evil presence" watching him from the shadows. And it had followed closely behind him everywhere he went.

There had also been a strong, almost overpowering smell, which had made him vomit several times. "It was like the stink of a jaguar's breath—an old man-eater," he had said trying to explain further.

The sentry who took over the following evening was a famous roughneck, a former pirate called Manuel Manuelo, who had only escaped the noose on condition that he served valiantly in the militia. He had done so, for he was a tough "hombre."

But when his captain suggested that Manuelo should have a companion with him on his tour of duty in the look-out post he just jeered and slapped his musket. That was the only companion he needed.

During the night, it might have been a fox the people down below the cliff in San Cristobel heard screaming, because they did scream like that during the mating season.

But it was more likely to have been Manuelo, for when his relief went up to the cliff-top that morning there was no sign of Manuel Manelo. The only thing was a faint, lingering pungent odor within the tower itself.

The commanding officer soon stated that he believed Manuelo had deserted to return to his old pirate life. If he did, then it certainly wasn't in the Caribbean, because he was never heard of again.

Three more sentries on night duty vanished within the next week, before any action was taken. It was officially believed that they were being lured away by smugglers or pirates and a watch was secretly ordered to be kept on the place during the hours of darkness.

For several nights, a patrol of handpicked men lay hidden in the jungle nearby, but nothing happened. Though the sentries had all complained about feeling "There was some presence there."

Just as the patrol was beginning to think it was all a false alarm, they saw the incredible happening. On a clear moonlit night a week later, they watched the sentry pacing slowly to and fro before the tower doorway.

Every so often he would halt nervously, holding his musket suspiciously before him, and stare about him into the shadows. But still nothing happened. The night was silent and still; nothing moved or made a sound.

Then the hidden troops saw the sentry walk through the tower doorway. As he did so a huge, dark shadow seemed to detach itself from the darkness and slither silently and shapelessly in after him.

Immediately they sprang from their hiding place and raced along the cliff top towards the watch-tower, but before they reached it the interior was suddenly lit up by a bright green light. It became so bright that it dazzled them.

As they hesitated nervously they heard a muffled scream from within the tower, followed by a sharp explosion, then the light went out abruptly.

The officers who accompanied the patrol and all the soldiers swore on oath about what they had seen and they also swore that nobody and nothing left that watch-tower. Yet when they went inside their comrade had vanished and the entire place was deserted.

All that remained was his musket, twisted and bent as though by intense heat. That—and an overpowering smell of what they described as brimstone . . . the fumes of which almost choked several of them and made them violently sick.

Sebastian Perego heard this tale when he asked why none of the troops stationed San Cristobel used such an advantageous look-out point. When he heard that the place hadn't been used for 200 years he roared with laughter, then cursed his men for being superstitious peasants.

Perego didn't believe that sort of thing. After all, he had been to America, he had fought with the American Marines—he'd prove that it was all rubbish.

But none of his fellow NCOs shared his confidence, so he went up there by himself—to the derelict, crumbling old watch-tower on the cliff-top.

Next morning he was two hours late in returning, so some of his men went to see what was keeping him. Several of them feared the worst—and they weren't far wrong ....

Perego was grovelling on the floor of the tower. His sub-machine was lying smashed in one corner, his uniform had been ripped to shreds, and his face and chest were covered with deep scratches.

But it was his eyes that made his friends cross themselves quickly, for they were like the eyes of somebody who had seen the Devil. And the sobs which shook his body were those of a man who had been pushed far beyond the limits of sanity.

Some weeks after psychiatrists reported Sebastian Perego was incurably insane, an investigation was made of the tower. Its walls were taken apart stone by stone, then the flagging stones were raised from the floors.

Beneath them the soldiers found a vaulted cell—and lying strewn about the cell were the mangled bodies of about five men.

The exact number was never fully discovered, for the bones had been mangled and savagely smashed into tiny pieces. There was no way into that cell except by prizing up the heavy flagstones and the original plans of the places drawn up in 1859 certainly showed no such cell.

But strewn about the ground in the vaulted cell were pieces of clothing, brass buttons, knives, bayonets and a few old muskets. The records in a military library and records office in Havana showed that some of the items belonged to the sentries who had disappeared more than 200 years ago.

What killed them so inhumanly and how their bodies got

there, is as big a mystery as the cause of Sebastian Perego's madness. In no case was there any rational, logical reason to be discovered.

DID THE CAT-WOMEN KILL THE BOY?

After a fierce storm, which had raged around the Isle of Skye one March day some 60 years ago, young Donald Campbell returned to his home in Dunvegan. And his pale face, unusually timid manner and nervousness puzzled his parents. For Donald had been as lively and unruly as any 12-year-old boy. Only that very afternoon he had gone happily off to visit his grandparents at their farm a few miles from the town . . . and he had returned a very frightened and dispirited child.

His clothing was grubby . . . and there was a long, deep scratch down one of his cheeks. But the boy stubbornly refused to explain what he'd been up to.

The only conclusion his parents could come to was that he'd got into a fight with some of the other boys in the town—or his grandparents had, perhaps, scolded him for some reason.

But what *had* happened to young Donald was that an afternoon which should have been a happy occasion, had become one of the most terrifying experiences of his life.

His visit to the farm had been all that it should have been —it was on the way home, in the late afternoon, that the trouble had started. Donald was halfway home when the storm burst. The wind howled in from the sea, the rain lashed down and thunder crashed all about him. It was a sudden storm, for which he'd been unprepared, so he looked around for shelter. That was when he saw the cottage—a half-ruined, derelict building—but at least it offered shelter from the rain. He went inside.

Tired by his walk, Donald found some sacks in a corner and soon fell asleep. A few hours later he was roused by a

curious scrabbling sound. He opened his eyes and saw, beside where he lay, a huge black cat.

It was not looking at him, however, but staring unblinkingly up through a hole in the roof through which two other cats were descending. As soon as all three were together on the ground they changed into three old women, two of whom the astonished boy recognized, for they lived near his parents in Dunvegan.

They were witches. As soon as they saw him, they came over to peer curiously at him. "Perhaps he's asleep," said one.

"It does not matter whether he is asleep or not," said the biggest cat-woman decidedly. "If he is asleep he knows nothing, but if he is awake he will not dare to say anything.

"For if you do," she added, looking at the frightened boy who was lying with his eyes closed tightly, "we will hear it and we will see to it. We will find you and we will kill you. I put the Fear upon you."

She made a sign with her hand and all three resumed their cat form. Two of them leaped back through the hole in the roof, but the black cat paused, looked at him, then deliberately scratched his cheek with a razor-sharp claw.

When the storm had ended, Donald lost no time in hurrying home. He seemed utterly exhausted, could neither eat, nor sleep, and refused to leave the house for the next few days.

Then one day he saw one of the old women passing by in the street outside. She saw Donald peering anxiously out at her—and raised a menacing, clawed hand . . .

Donald's mother heard a scream—rushed into the room and found him lying unconscious on the floor. The almost healed scar in his cheek was bleeding again.

And a large black cat which had been sitting on the window ledge outside sprang away with an angry hiss. . . .

The witch had overdone her threat, and Donald's fear showed so plainly that his mother persuaded him to tell her the truth. He did—and named two of the witches. His mother, anxious for advice, confided in a neighbor.

Soon all the village knew, and so did the witches—but nothing happened. Donald soon regained his health and forgot about the witches—and their threat.

Then a year later, when Donald was again visiting his grandparents another storm arose. His mother remembered what had happened the previous year and hurried off to find her son.

She did, but it was too late. He was lying huddled in a corner of that ruined cottage . . . and he was dead.

He had been attacked by several animals with long, razor-sharp claws. Had the witches killed him for revealing their secret?

TWO MEN WITH ONE NIGHTMARE

It was May 11, 1812, that the Earl of Harrowby entertained the Prime Minister, Spencer Perceval, at his home near London. After an evening discussing politics over a bottle of good wine, they decided to retire for the night.

For the host, the night was to pass without incident, but for his guest a terrifying dream was to be talking point when the two men met for breakfast next morning. Spencer Perceval related to his close friend how he had seen himself, in the lobby of the House of Commons, shot down by an assassin.

As the Prime Minister was in fact intending to go to the House that morning, the Earl urged him not to go. But Spencer Perceval insisted upon doing so.

Several hundred miles away from London, in Redruth, Cornwall, a Mr. Williams had the same dream. He was so alarmed that he awoke his wife and told her about it. But for some strange reason that he could not account for, Williams thought the man in his dream was the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

In actual fact he did not know what either man looked or dressed like, but felt sure something in the dream had indicated the man to be Chancellor and not the Prime Minister.

Neither Williams or his wife slept for the rest of the night, and when dawn broke, the Williams's got up, washed and dressed, and made haste to the house of the local doctor. The doctor had only returned to Redruth by stagecoach a few days earlier. For the past six months he had been in London.

He invited the Williams's into his house, and was very interested in the description the husband gave of the man in his dream. He asked him several times to repeat this description before telling the astonished man that he was not describing the Chancellor, but the Prime Minister.

The trio then set out for the local church, where Williams told his story to the vicar. Both he and the doctor decided to write down everything that could be remembered about the dream—including a description of the assassin.

The incident might have been forgotten, except that two days later the mail coach from London arrived at Redruth. Passengers on the coach told the villagers that the Prime Minister had indeed been assassinated in the lobby of the House of Commons on May 11.

Stranger still was the description given of the assassin—a man named Bellingham. It resembled down to the last detail the description given by Williams to the vicar on the very day of the assassination.

It was arranged that Williams and the vicar should take the next mail coach to London, and make for the House of Commons.

Immediately on arrival, Williams went over and pointed to a certain spot. "That is where I saw the Prime Minister shot in my dream!" he said. "And from that pillar there I saw a man come forward with a gun in his hand."

It was precisely where Spencer Perceval had fallen, and the assassin had indeed come from behind that pillar.

The Earl of Harrowby, on hearing that two men were in London telling an amazing story, sought them out. He questioned Williams closely and asked to see for himself the story as written down by the vicar.

Only then did he reveal to the two men that the Prime Minister had had the same dream . . . but he had not lived to tell the tale himself.

THE HOUSE OF EVIL DECAY

There wasn't a sound to be heard in the basement, except the faint scraping noise, as a white rat gnawed at a piece of cheese. And an occasional whirring noise from a clock placed on the floor nearby.

It was well after midnight and to the four men sitting beneath the white dazzling light from four naked electric lamps it had been a long evening—and a longer night lay ahead of them. For nothing had happened . . . and nothing probably would, so they sat in their canvas chairs and watched the rat gnawing busily away at the cheese inside the reinforced wire cage. It seemed a cheerful enough rat.

There wasn't anything remarkable about that house. It was simply one terraced house in a street of other identical buildings in a south London suburb. And in the early Spring of 1929, there were many like it.

Above the basement were three other floors, but it was the basement that was remarkable. Loud bangings, nerve-shattering whistlings, and high-pitched scratchings, had all been reported from there. So many people had noticed it all, that it could hardly have been explained away as imagination.

Objects had been hurled violently about, too, while tenants who went down there at night to bring up coal or other household items, had been attacked by a powerful, invisible force that threw them violently against the walls.

And then there was the awful, revolting stench that accompanied these manifestations. It was like the stench from an opened grave.

Reporter Stanley Bishop's editor possessed a nose for a good story . . . and that was why Stanley was there that

evening, on orders from the boss. There were many other places Stanley would rather have been than stuck in a suburban cellar.

However, at least he wasn't alone. For there was a local bank manager who'd been invited along as an independent witness, a priest and an investigator from the Society for Psychical Research. They had all come to probe the mystery of the haunting of the basement. The malignant powerful force present there had been local gossip for many years, but recently it had taken on a new, menacing activity.

It had become the poltergeist which had the power to turn fresh meat putrid, to injure cats and dogs, and to make people retch violently in its presence.

But the evening Stanley Bishop was there, things seemed quiet enough—so peaceful that he began to wish he could have dropped off to sleep for a few moments. But there was no chance for that—because the lights which were lighting up the place were too bright, and placed so that there wasn't one single shadow in the room. Even the most distant corners were lit up, showing every crack and cobweb.

Then as the clock on the floor whirred and struck the quarter after midnight, Stanley suddenly stiffened with surprise and leaned forward to see what the other men were watching so intently.

It was the caged rat. It had suddenly stopped nibbling the cheese and was crouching in a corner of the cage staring slowly around the room . . . its eyes were wide with terror, its fangs bared in a vicious snarl.

Then slowly the observers sensed a cold, inhuman, invisible sense of evil filling the room about them. The place was still well lit, but it was as if a slight mist was darkening the brightness.

Bishop swore softly to himself as he saw the rat stiffen, scream and roll over in the cage. It was dead. But before he could move he saw the incredible, the impossible, happen.

Before the astonished, horrified gaze of the four men, the rat's smooth white coat began to shrivel away. The hairs

disintegrated . . . and the body rapidly dissolved away into a rotting, slimey substance.

That was when every man present felt the intense chill in the room—as an awful, repugnant odor swept through the air, so powerful that it made them want to vomit as they rushed from the cellar.

Then a few minutes later when they returned, the coldness had departed, and they discovered that the air was as pure and fresh as it had ever been.

In the morning, Stanley Bishop made more detailed inquiries into the house's history, and discovered that it had been regarded as haunted almost from the day it was built. For the past 50 years, nobody had lived there for more than a few months.

The tenants who had moved in had always complained that something—or somebody—was threatening their lives and sanity. Visitors had never accepted second invitations to stay there . . . and several household pets had needed to be destroyed after developing mysterious ailments.

Things had reached such a pitch that the owner of the property was seriously considering having it demolished, until the Society for Psychical Research and the Press stepped in.

The next evening the men returned. But this time there were only three men, because the bank manager—the "unbiased witness"—had refused to enter the place again. All three had brought gas masks and the journalist, Bishop, had also brought along a shoulder of lamb. It was from a freshly slaughtered carcase and had been purchased in London's Smithfield market only a few hours earlier. It had been conveyed to the house packed in ice.

With shreds of ice still clinging to it, the meat was placed on a muslin-covered dish in the middle of the cellar floor. Then with the basement as well lighted as it had been the previous evening, the psychical researcher, the priest and Stanley Bishop sat down and watched the piece of meat.

For about an hour, nothing happened. Then the coldness crept into the room again. Immediately the three men leaned

forward in their seats—and Bishop picked up his camera.

The stench soon came back into the room, and quickly the men whipped on their gas masks. Then Bishop focused his camera on that fresh piece of lamb.

Once again, before their very eyes, the incredible happened. A freshly slaughtered piece of meat, weighing several pounds, turned bluish . . . and started to decay. In a few minutes the blue sheen had turned to gray, then finally it flopped over on the floor as a decaying, rotten mass of putrified slime.

Bishop had captured the entire process on film, because he knew that it was something neither he nor anybody else there would ever see again, for a few seconds later, the priest stepped forward. Sprinkling Holy water about the cellar, he paced solemnly around. And invoking the old incantation of bell, book and candle, by the Word of God—he exorcised the place.

Stanley Bishop was certainly not the most religious of men, for as a journalist he had seen too much of the seamy side of life. But he had also seen the horrors in that basement. And for as long as he kept in touch with the owner of that house, the terrifying evil which had haunted the premises never returned.

THE SLEEPWALKER WITH MURDER IN HIS HEART

As a policeman, Robert Ledru's colleagues and superiors in Paris found him a source of embarrassment, for he was known to be an extortionist and blackmailer: moreover, he was suspected of having effectively and completely silenced criminals whose guilt he had been unable to prove.

His private life, too, frequently involved him in trouble, because he had become notorious as a seducer of women. Sometimes the victims of his advances were the wives of his colleagues. But despite all this nobody could deny that he was one of the most brilliant criminal investigators the word has ever known.

One day in 1887, however, Ledru was to find himself

involved in a terrifying chain of events, linked with the weirdest murder he was ever to investigate. And the killer's identification was to shock a nation.

Ledru had been sent to Le Havre to investigate the mysterious disappearances of several sailors. It was a case which had completely baffled local police—so they had sent for the genius himself, Robert Ledru.

After making some preliminary investigations on his first day in Le Havre, Ledru retired to his hotel room quite early, for he was rather tired after his journey from Paris.

In the morning, he was awakened by a hotel porter with a message that he was wanted urgently at the police station. Ledru rose from his bed and noticed that he was still wearing his socks and that they were soaking wet.

Wondering what had happened, Ledru changed, dressed and hurried around to the police headquarters. His immediate work on the vanishing sailors had been superseded by a more important problem. A man known as Andre Monet had been found murdered on the beach.

Monet, a 45-year-old shopkeeper from Paris had been shot at close range and the bullet had passed right through his body. The bullet was eventually found, so Ledru started searching the beach for other clues.

Then he found a row of footprints embedded in the wet sand, just a few minutes before the incoming tide washed them away forever. But his initial shout of joy changed to a look of horror as he examined them with a Le Havre detective.

The change which came across Ledru surprised everybody. Instead of waiting for the plaster casts to be made, he turned and rushed back to his hotel, where he began searching for something. It was several hours before he told anybody what was wrong.

His pistol was missing from his luggage. Suddenly Ledru seemed to lose all interest in his work. Neither the murder investigations, nor the mysterious vanishing seamen could rouse him from his lethargy . . . and for the next few days he stayed in his hotel room.

Then he finally appeared at the police station where

several suspects and witnesses were being questioned about Monet's death. Ledru just shrugged and told the Le Havre police that they were wasting their time—for he knew the identity of the murderer.

That was all he would say, but he took the murder bullet and the plaster casts of the footprints back with him to Paris. On reaching his office there he burst in on his superior officer and said: "You will have to arrest me . . . for the murder of Andre Monet."

Then with the professionalism for which he was famous, Robert Ledru began to build a case for the prosecution against himself

Exhibit one was the plaster casts of the footprints which had been taken from the wet sand. At first it was thought they were from naked feet . . . one of which had a toe missing.

Ledru was able to point to a faint pattern beneath the blurred outlines which suggested a pair of thin socks. The pattern matched the socks which he had been wearing—and he had an identical missing toe on the same foot as the one in the plaster cast.

Exhibit two was the bullet which had killed Monet. Ledru was able to find bullets at the police firing range which had come from his missing pistol . . . and ballistic experts soon matched them up.

Exhibit three was a strange one. It was the dream Ledru remembered from the night of the murder. In this he had risen from sleep, changed into his underwear, pulled on his socks and, with his pistol, climbed from his hotel window onto the beach.

He walked through the surf until he saw Monet standing there, and shot him. Then he hurled the weapon as far as he could out into the sea. To the surprise of the French police who listened to Ledru's story, he was claiming that he had murdered while sleepwalking.

Surete officials found the story almost too incredible to believe. Almost, but not quite. For Ledru was placed in a cell, where he could be observed for 24 hours a day.

On the very first evening, he fell asleep under the influence of a mild sedative. After a few hours in a deep sleep, Ledru suddenly rose to his feet, and started to beat with his fists at the cell doorway.

All the time his eyes were closed, his movements were like those of a demented person . . . and his voice rang out in heartbreaking sobs and cries of despair.

In the morning his hands were bruised and bleeding from the vehemence of his actions. But Ledru remembered nothing about the incidents.

During that morning, when Ledru was assisting with the inquiries into Monet's death, a pistol loaded with blank cartridges was hidden beneath the mattress in his bunk. Nobody could have told him it was there, for only a few highly placed officials knew about it.

Certainly Ledru was not seen once to show any knowledge of its presence—until that night, when he rose like a man in a trance, searched about the bed for the weapon—and found it. Then he fired it through the bars at a warder who was sitting at a desk a few yards along the corridor.

In the morning, Ledru was questioned as to how he had known the gun was there. He replied that he "had seen sombody place a pistol beneath the mattress . . . then saw myself pick it up . . . and kill a man."

But again he showed no memory of actually doing so apart from in a dream. Yet when the warder he had attempted to kill was shown to him, Ledru turned pale—and fainted.

Ledru, however, was never brought to trial for Andre Monet's murder, even though his gun was eventually recovered . . . even though detectives checking on his story found other evidence to convict him. For many leading French doctors and psychiatrists questioned him and studied him, and concluded that he suffered from "Homicidal somnambulism."

He was retired from the police force and lived an almost completely isolated life for the next 50 years. His only companions were male nurses who looked after his needs.

And on at least five occasions, several of them narrowly escaped with their lives, when Ledru walked in his sleep . . . with murder in his heart.

THE DISTAFF DORIAN GRAY

By day, the painting which hung for almost two centuries in Raynham Hall, Norfolk, was the portrait of a very beautiful woman. She had been the lady of the manor, Lady Dorothy Townshend. But whenever the moonlight shone on the canvas a startling change took place . . .

Her pensive features suddenly acquired an expression of a strange and frightening evil quality. And if anybody ever carried a candle towards the portrait at moments like these, Lady Dorothy's flesh could be seen to wither rapidly away until there was nothing left there but a skull and black eye sockets.

Sometimes, too, when that happened it was as if the candlelight had released her spirit from the canvas—and set it free to roam around the paneled rooms and paved hallways of the old Tudor manor house.

Many people claimed to have seen the ghost, including one English King. But it wasn't until 1936 that the specter was photographed.

Society photographer Indre Shira and his assistant, Alfred Provand, had been commissioned by the Townshend family to take a series of pictures of the house. On the afternoon of September 19, they were working on the interior of the house.

With Mr. Provand operating the camera, Indre Shira was placing the lights and operating a flashgun to get the maximum effect, then they came to the fine staircase with its old, handcarved wooden bannisters. Shira was studying it with professional interest, planning out camera angles.

His assistant had already taken one picture of the stairway and was re-setting his camera, when Shira gasped aloud with surprise—because at the top of the stairs he

could see a misty figure slowly materializing into the recognizable form of a woman.

And as Indre Shira watched—in mid-afternoon and broad daylight—the ghostly form slowly and gracefully floated down the stairs.

Shira quickly called to Provand to focus the camera without delay and get a shot, because there was an opportunity of a lifetime—a photograph that would be a sensation!

Provand had not seen the apparition and Shira's great excitement astonished him, but he quickly aimed the camera and took a picture.

Then as the blinding glare of the flash faded away, Indre Shira realized that the ghost had, too.

Provand wanted to know what all the sudden excitement was all about, but when Shira told him about the ghost on the stairs, Provand obviously didn't believe him. Shira indignantly wagered Provand five pounds that when the plate was developed and printed the ghost would be on the picture.

Shira won his bet. For the Brown Lady *did* appear with startling clarity in the photograph.

The strange thing about that occasion was she had appeared not dressed in brown as usual, but in a white lacey bridal gown.

The photograph roused tremendous interest, but some people inevitably declared that it was a fake. Experts, however, examined the picture thoroughly and stated that it was no fake; the ghost *had* been photographed.

The out-of-character wedding gown was explained by one legend that told how in the 18th century, the young Dorothy Walpole had been compelled to marry an old roué and suffered the most horrifying experiences with her husband.

Dorothy was the daughter of Robert Walpole, M.P. for Houghton in Norfolk, and her brother was the famous Sir Robert Walpole, England's first Prime Minister.

Dorothy came to know Viscount Charles Townshend when they were both children. She fell in love with Charles,

but her father was against this match because he did not wish it to be thought that he was marrying off his daughter to his ward to his own advantage.

However, after the death of her first husband, Charles and Dorothy did eventually marry, but their happiness lasted only a few short years, because Lady Dorothy Townshend died suddenly—and in mysterious circumstances.

No satisfactory explanation was ever offered for her death, and many people at the time believed this was concealed for political reasons, as the political party in which her husband and her brother both held important positions was then in power.

But ever since then her ghost has often been seen wandering about her former home. And the terrifying occult phenomena of her portrait has been witnessed and experimented with by countless people, including King George IV, who also saw her ghost a few nights later.

According to the Monarch, he was roused from his sleep late at night in Raynham Hall by a cold draft sweeping across the room. And when he opened his eyes, he experienced the most frightening moment of his life—for there was a woman, dressed in brown, staring at him with an ashen white face.

Some years later, the portrait was sold in London, where it fetched a record price. But nobody has ever noticed the weird transformations happening again.

THE VOICE FROM THE "DEAD" MAN

Philip Raybould opened his eyes and saw the pale moonlight streaming through his bedroom window. He didn't know what had wakened him, for there was no sound to be heard.

Then suddenly he found himself thinking about his close friend Joseph Ketch . . . suddenly he found himself *worrying* about Ketch. Yet they'd been in each other's company only a few days earlier, on December 9, 1883, when

they'd gone to a dinner party not far from their home in York.

Raybould lay there for several minutes unable to get back to sleep. Then he heard Ketch's familiar voice—but sounding as if it was coming from a long way off—saying: "They are going to bury me, Philip—you mustn't let them!"

Raybould was so affected by this, that he got out of bed and hurriedly dressed and he made his way across the city to his friend's home.

When he arrived, he discovered that the family were indeed in mourning and Ketch's body lay in an upstairs room, in its coffin.

The coffin lid had not been screwed down, to allow the family and friends to pay their last respects before the funeral.

Raybould was grieved and also disturbed by a strange and compelling urge that was in him. He learned from the family that the burial was to take place early that morning.

He asked to be allowed to go upstairs to pay his respects to his dear friend. Ketch's widow, however, was astonished that Raybould had come.

She told him: "I did not send word of Joseph's death, because it was so sudden and we thought you were away on business. How did you know that he was dead?"

Raybould could only shake his head and say that he had been awakened by her husband's voice. He told her also of a boyhood pact with her husband—they had vowed whichever one of them died first, he would try to return to Earth in the spirit to give the survivor some sign that there was an afterlife.

But as he made his way upstairs, Raybould had a strange feeling that it was *not* Ketch's dead spirit he had heard . . . and when he stooped over Ketch's body he suddenly became aware that there was a faint sign of life.

At once, he persuaded Mrs. Ketch to summon the doctor, who soon confirmed that her husband was still alive.

And miraculously, Ketch did recover. He was never again

to be his old fit and active self, for he was doomed to be always an invalid. But he did live another ten years after his "first death."

THE KILLER POLTERGEIST

Michael White moved into his house in Barnsley, Yorkshire, at the beginning of August, 1956, with his wife and two children, and it was one of the happiest days of their married life—for they had never had a home of their own before. Situated in the pleasant area on Harborough Hill, it wasn't very far from the glass factory where Michael worked . . . and the school for the oldest child, six-year-old Steven, was just a few yards down the road.

Even their neighbors were all that they could wish them to be. Several of them often looked after the baby, Michelle, or baby-sat in the evenings when Michael wanted to take his wife Helga out for the evening.

For the first week in their new home their life was one of complete, unspoiled bliss. But on the eighth day the uncanny incidents started. . . .

That day, Michael White was sitting in their living room with his wife when they heard loud rappings behind a china cabinet. The noises were so forceful, that the cabinet began to rock violently.

There were stairs behind this wall and upstairs the two young children were asleep. At first, neither Mr. White nor Helga placed much importance on the strange knocking sounds.

But that incident was only the beginning of a whole series of strange events which ranged over ten weeks. Helga White became so nervous she refused to be alone in the house.

In November, Mr. White went to the local renting agent to ask him to find them another house. Then he went to a local newspaper office to seek advice on how to get rid of a poltergeist.

A reporter, Donald Chamberlain, interviewed Mr. and Mrs. White, and his account of the weird happenings at the house led to an investigation by psychic researchers. The house being built on a spot that might have been subjected to the effects of extensive coal mining under the area—subsidence—was fully taken into consideration.

Most of the ghostly disturbances that took place were unexplained noises. These were said to have happened frequently after the first instance, and practically every day after that.

Once, when he was taking a bath, Michael heard four loud bangs on the bathroom door. But when he looked outside there was nobody there.

On another occasion both Mr. White and his son heard tapping on the top of a wooden sideboard in the kitchen. Later, repeated knocking sounds were heard by Mrs. White —just as if somebody was *running* up and down the wall.

More than once ghostly footsteps were heard by the family—sometimes on the landing upstairs outside the bedrooms.

Then, at the beginning of October they heard the sound of sobbing. A weird noise . . . something between crying and howling . . . was heard from the kitchen—and there was no human upstairs at the time.

One day, shortly after some household goods had been stored in a spare room upstairs, the Whites heard "somebody running about upstairs in the spare bedroom." But again there was nobody there—nothing.

The disturbances were not only the strange sounds. Door handles were seen to turn when there was nobody near them. When their son reached for his knife once at the table, it suddenly wriggled away from him, moved around a sugar bowl, and finally stopped nearly two feet away.

But the most frightening incident of all was when Steven, eager to help his mother, went to help with the washing up after dinner.

Suddenly Michael heard a loud gurgling sound and rushed to the sink to find Steven, with his face under the water, fighting for breath, his hands gripping the edge

of the sink and struggling against some powerful, invisible force which was trying to drown him.

He pulled the boy clear and Steven confirmed that something had come up behind him and forced his face under the water—a frightening power that held him literally helpless . . .

There was no question of Steven having slipped—he was still kneeling on a stool when his father found him.

On another occasion, when Mrs. White was carrying two saucepans from the pantry, something unseen started to pull them out of her hands, and the pans were seen to fly nine feet across the kitchen. One struck Michael on the head, the other fell about six feet away.

What caused these weird happenings? The house was haunted by a particularly malignant poltergeist, and continued to be until the Whites finally moved out.

THE PHANTOM CHESS GAME

Roger Marples sat before his chessboard in the living room of his house in Rawmarsh, Yorkshire, and twisted the shade of a table lamp so that the light shone full upon the black and white pieces.

In the shadows, an investigator from the British Society for Psychical Research set his camera speed with elaborate care.

Then the game began. Marples, his hands clenching the table edge, watched his opponent's moves with painful concentration. He moved his white pieces with elaborate care. Seconds later, the black chessmen swivelled across the squares to counter his moves, to block his advances.

And all the time, in the shadows, the man took pictures.

They were worth taking, for no one was sitting in the other chair Marples had pulled up to the chesboard! Yet he was playing with a chess-master, a man with whom he had studied the game for over 20 years . . . a man who had died a year before!

The phantom chess game took place in October, 1937,

12 months to the day after the death of Marples' oldest friend, Colin Robertson. The S.P.R. investigator, wary of trickery, had searched the room before the game. He was looking for hidden wires, mirrors, the entire paraphenalia of deceit. But he had found nothing.

Today, it remains one of the world's strangest ghost stories. And it began with a vow that two friends made ten years before. They agreed that whoever died first would return in a year—and play a game of chess.

Colin Robertson and Roger Marples became friends in 1918 It was an association that was to last all their lives—and not even death, it seems, could break it.

Marples and Robertson were both draftsmen, both lived at Rawmarsh. They had often discussed religion and both felt that they needed definite proof that there was for man a life after death.

It was during such a discussion in 1932 that the two made the solemn promise that the first to die would endeavor to return to earth at least long enough to give the survivor a clear sign that life, in some form, went on after death.

Both men shared an enthusiasm for chess, and played together at least once a week. Often their wives would complain of being neglected when the two men became immersed in the intricacies of a game. Indeed, chess was almost an obsession.

Both were skilled and resourceful players, and both secretly studied new moves, hoping to outwit the other with some unexpected gambit. But habit grows, and Robertson had one favorite opening move, and invariably employed it. Marples came to know and recognize this opening so well that he was continually experimenting with new counters for it.

Then in October, 1936, the comfortable and uneventful world of Marples was turned brutally upside down. Colin Robertson was killed in a road accident.

There was no one to play chess with any more. Mrs. Robertson sold her husband's chessmen, and Marples put his away. There were others in the village who would will-

ingly have given him a game, but it would not have been the same. If he couldn't play with Robertson then he would play with no one.

Months went by, and the wound caused by the sudden loss of his friend slowly began to heal.

One evening in August, when his wife was out, Marples, finally got out his chess board, set out the pieces and for about an hour conducted an imaginary game—playing one against the other—black against white. But he tired of this, finding it wearisome and unrewarding.

He missed his old friend badly at such times, and the thought of the tragedy that had killed him so young and with so much to look forward to, was strongly in his mind.

Almost absently he set the chess pieces in the starting positions. Suddenly, an inexplicable feeling of apprehension came over him. He noticed the fire, which had burned low, suddenly flare into life as a wave of cold air swept suddenly through the room.

Marples glanced at the chessboard in front of him and saw to his utter astonishment that a pawn had been moved. He shook his head and blinked. He felt sure he had set all the pieces in the starting squares. Carefully he picked up the black pawn and replaced it in the starting square—and was aghast to see it immediately rise up from the board as if lifted by a phantom hand. . . .

And then, suddenly, all fear left him. He stared at the pawn, and in that tense moment, remembered the vow he and Robertson had once made.

Something else strange struck him too—the pawn had been moved to a certain square—and this was precisely the first move that his friend had always made when he was about to employ his favorite opening gambit.

For two hours Marples played a game of chess that had all the elements of the macabre, for it was a ghostly, unseen hand that moved the black pieces over the board and removed white pieces taken in the game.

When his wife returned, Marples was in such a state of exhaustion that she wondered whether to call a doctor—and

when he began to tell her excitedly, that Robertson had been there, most of the evening, and that they had played a game of chess, Mrs. Marples feared he was going out of his mind.

But Marples insisted that he was telling the truth. "How can I prove it?" he asked. He stared at the chess board, the pieces once again set out for a new game.

Suddenly, as they watched, a single pawn rose from the board, moved through the air unaided and was set down in another square.

On the first anniversary of Robertson's death, Marples arranged for a psychic researcher to witness a ghostly chess game.

Later, the researcher wrote in his report to the S.P.R.: "There is no doubt I saw the chess pieces move about the board, while Mr. Marples sat at least two feet away.

"I saw at least seven moves made, while Mr. Marples had his hands folded in his lap. I searched the room before and afterwards, but found no equipment of any sort, or signs of any having been used.

"The temperature in the room dropped by eleven degrees during the demonstration."

Only two of the photographs taken during the game were developed successfully. One shows a black king being lifted about two inches from the board. The other shows a pawn being rocked on its base.

Was it a genuine chess game with a ghost? Was it a hoax of breathtaking skill? We will never know. For when Roger Marples died in 1966, the strangest chess game of all time was finally and irrevocably over.

HALF A WOMAN

There wasn't a room left in Meggernie Castle when Edward Simons arrived there for the weekend in September, 1904—except the one in the tower. His host, Herbert Woods, was very apologetic about the matter, because no-

body had ever wanted to spend the night there before.

Woods explained that the sealed door in the corner seemed to alarm them. But when Simons examined the door, it looked just like any other door. It was solid, made of age-blackened oak, and it was locked.

What intrigued Simons was that the keyhole had been firmly waxed over so that there was no access to it. He was even more mystified to discover that his neighbor, Beaumont Fetherstone, had discovered an identical doorway in his room.

However, as their host hadn't bothered to mention the matter, they decided to forget it and just enjoy their stay there.

Edward Simons didn't know how long he'd been asleep that night before he was violently awakened. It was as if somebody had touched his cheek with a red-hot iron—and there was a woman standing beside his bed. At least, it was *almost* a woman. . . .

For a few moments he failed to realize what was wrong. He was so befuddled with sleep that he leaped out of bed before realizing he was staring at *the upper half* of a woman's body . . . and it was slowly gliding across the room! As Simons watched, the half-body moved towards the sealed door and disappeared through it.

Simons darted across to the door, expecting to find it open—but it was just as securely fastened as it had ever been.

To calm his nerves and give him time to think, Simons lit his candle and crossed to a mirror to examine the cheek on which he had felt the burning sensation, but there wasn't a mark to be seen. He realized he must have experienced something supernatural. But Simons was a very rational kind of man who refused, at first, to even consider such an idea.

There just had to be some sensible explanation for the appearance of the apparition he had seen. So, candle in hand, he made a thorough search of the rest of the tower, the passages and stairways, every nook and corner.

But he returned to his bed, a very perplexed man in-

deed. For there had been nothing that might have explained his strange experience.

The following morning, when he met Fetherstone, he learned that he, too, had seen a ghost. They both told Woods and his wife about it. Fetherstone said that his room had been lit with a strange, pink light and he saw the top half of a woman moving about.

After a moment or so, Woods told them that a week earlier maids in the castle had been frightened by the *bottom* half of a ghostly woman!

Simons and Fetherstone were moved to different rooms the next evening, when some other guests left. Then a few days later, Simons had his second encounter with the supernatural.

He was in the library, writing a letter, when he became aware that the room had become very cold. He started to shiver, yet there was a huge log blazing away merrily. Then there came a sensation of terror.

Suddenly, he saw the heavy, studded library door opening slowly . . . and the upper half of a woman's body went gliding past down the corridor.

Now thoroughly frightened, Simons decided to go to his bedroom. To reach this he had to go along a long flagged passage. There was one window in the passage and as he passed it he saw quite vividly the face of a beautiful young woman peering in through the window—and on her face was an expression of great sorrow.

Simons recognized her, for he had seen her twice before—she was the ghost with half a body. Suddenly the face vanished.

Simons knew that he simply had to find out what strange history lay behind the spirit that haunted the castle. It took time and much patient interrogation, but eventually he learned that in the 12th century, when Meggernie Castle was still part of the estates of the Clan Menzies, the chief had a beautiful wife. She was faithful and innocent, but her beauty attracted the attentions of other men, and Menzies was a violently jealous man. One night, when his lovely wife was sleeping in the room Fetherstone had

occupied, the chief awoke from a drunken stupor and struck his wife savagely.

Realizing what he had done, the man implored her to forgive him, but it was too late; she was dead.

He panicked and tried to think how he could conceal the corpse. He decided to hack the body of his lovely young wife into two pieces. He hid one half of the body in the drawer of a chest in the small powder closet and the other half in another room.

In the next few weeks so many people, her friends and the other men who had admired her, kept asking where she had disappeared to. The clan chief's reply was that she had gone back to live with her own family for a while.

Then one evening, his two brothers-in-law came to visit their sister. As they waited, the murderer wondered what excuse he could give them. Suddenly the two brothers rose and stared past him, their faces were white with horror.

The chief looked around and he saw his dead wife's ghost gliding down the stairs towards the hall. But it was only half a ghost; the bottom part from the waist down was missing.

PICTURE OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

There's a retired Army officer living in London, who only has to flick through the pages of his photograph album to realize that he may once have witnessed the impossible. For one afternoon, in May 1917, he photographed a man and a boy performing the Indian Rope Trick.

Since then his picture has been examined by experts and published in newspapers many times—and there is no doubt that the photograph is a genuine one. But how genuine was the *performance*?

The Indian Rope Trick has so intrigued magicians that one of them offered £10,000 plus £250 a week, to anybody who could give an authentic demonstration on open ground,

without using any apparatus apart from the rope. And the Magic Circle of the Society of Magicians has another £1,000 set aside for the same purpose.

But all this money seems quite safe, because technically, there is no such thing as a *genuine* Indian Rope Trick. And those who claim to have seen it performed have either been hoodwinked by the oldest piece of "kidology" in the world . . . or they have witnessed an illusion. At least that's the theory.

But when Lieutenant F. W. Holmes, a First World War holder of the Victoria Cross, was stationed in India, he witnessed what appeared to be an authentic demonstration outside of his bungalow in broad daylight.

He was in the company of some fellow officers when an old man and a boy stopped a few feet away. The man slowly unwound a long rope from around his waist, then threw one end high in the air.

To the amazement of the soldiers, the rope seemed to freeze into a vertical position. Then the small Indian boy scrambled to the top of the rope, clung there for several minutes—while Lieutenant Holmes photographed the scene—then slid nimbly to the ground again.

The man then tapped the rope lightly with his hand. It collapsed onto the ground, he picked it up, rewound it around his waist, and calmly walked away. It was the most incredible thing the British officers had ever witnessed—and that photograph caused a world-wide sensation.

The famous magician, the late James Nevil Maskelyne, was so certain the Rope Trick had never been—and never could be—performed that he went to extreme lengths to investigate it. With some friends he announced publicly that he would pay £5,000 to anybody who could prove otherwise.

Many hundreds of pounds more were spent in advertising this challenge all around the world. But there were no takers. Yet the subject so fascinated Maskelyne and his son that they both went to India to find somebody who could perform the trick. They were only too eager to be con-

vinced that there was hard fact hidden behind the legend.

Some years later after Maskylene died, his grandson, Jasper, made the challenge again. He, too, spent many months investigating the reports from Indians and travelers who said that they had seen "the real thing." There were quite literally hundreds of sworn statements which he followed up . . . but they all lead nowhere.

Finally Jasper Maskelyne announced that he would pay £10,000 and £250 a week during his stay in India to anyone who could produce a fakir who could do the trick.

Jasper Maskelyne is now living in Kenya and he certainly hasn't paid out any of that money. But he is still hoping that one day he will see a demonstration of the Indian magic which has intrigued him since childhood.

There have been many professional magicians who have performed a rope trick. Some of them have been brilliantly baffling, but they have all been quite literally tricks.

Perhaps the most popular performer was the American magician Horace Goldin whose version was so fast, slick, and convincing that it fooled audiences all around the world.

Goldin did it in the traditional manner, complete with a small boy who scrambled to the top of the rope—and then vanished, as Goldin fired a pistol at him. This was no illusion. It was professional magic.

Goldin performed against a black back-cloth on the stage, and the rope was hoisted aloft by a fine wire. There were also two strong metal supports concealed behind the rope, which held a black bag that merged into the background!

It was into this "bag" that the boy went when Goldin fired the pistol at him. But this was professional stuff, dramatic entertainment. It was not the Indian Rope Trick of legend.

A few days after the Magic Circle's original offer of £500 in 1934—it was doubled twenty-three years later—a member of the British College of Psychic Science, Dr. Alexander Cannon, claimed that it *could* be done.

He approached the Circle and said that if they increased the reward to £50,000, he would bring fakirs from India,

import a shipload of special sand and have the Albert Hall suitably heated for the performance.

The Magic Circle's president, Lord Ampthill—a former Viceroy of India—agreed to this, provided Dr. Cannon refunded all the money if his experiment failed. The doctor quickly changed his mind.

The celebrated magician, Robert Harbin, a member of the Magic Circle, explained to me that the Indian Rope Trick is quite impossible to perform in the way popularly imagined by the public. However, a member of the public wrote to Mr. Harbin a few years ago with a unique plan with which to perform the rope trick.

It is an almost foolproof system, which could be performed out of doors and would baffle anybody—except, of course, a member of the Society of Magicians!

"The only trouble is," he explains, "the apparatus needed to prepare this act would be quite prohibitive. Magicians spend years planning and perfecting an act, we spend literally hundreds of pounds on one trick, but it has a limited life-time.

"Show it once on television and that's that—everybody's seen it."

But the challenge and the money are still there for anyone who can prove that Lieutenant Holmes' eyes—and camera—did *not* decieve him.

VENGEANCE OF THE WOMAN IN WHITE

One warm evening in June, 1907, a Scots shepherd named Jock Rayburn stood under a tall pine tree and gazed at the grim and imposing structure of the mansion they called the Great House of Allanbank.

Jock was waiting for his sweetheart, Clarice McCall, and had grown impatient, for she was late. He was wondering whether she had forgotten the meeting, when suddenly, through the trees, he caught the white gleam of the summer dress.

He ran towards her, but the girl in the white dress did

not return his greeting. Instead, she stopped, and stood quite still beneath a tree, her face deep in shadow

As Rayburn drew near, he was even more astounded to see her apparently disappear into thin air! But he knew that she was flesh and blood. The evening light, he thought, must be playing tricks.

Seconds later, he spotted her again—some distance off among the trees. He decided that she was teasing him, so joining in the spirit of the game he gave chase.

Again, as he drew close, she vanished, to reappear some distance from him under the sombre trees.

Jock was a patient man, but this was too much, and finally, deciding to teach her a lesson, he turned on his heel and stamped away through the trees.

As he was leaving the park that surrounded the mansion, he caught a sudden glimpse of a white dress, and met Clarice hurrying up the lane.

"I'm so sorry I'm late," she said breathlessly. "And I was afraid you might not wait!"

Indignantly, Jock asked her what she was playing at, why she was teasing him? Had he not just spent a tiresome half hour chasing her in and out of the trees?

Clarice stared at him bewildered. "But," she insisted, "I've only just got here—that could not have been me you were chasing!"

She broke off and turned towards the sombre house of Allanbank, and they both knew instinctively that what Jock had seen was the ghost of the woman they called Pearlin Jean . . . the most persistent and notorious specter in Scotland.

She still appears at least once a year—a graceful little figure in a white silk dress, and haunts in death the house she never saw in life.

It was in 1672 that handsome young Robert Stuart, Laird of Kilgare, left Allanbank for a grand tour of Europe to finish his education.

He was rich and frivolous and in Paris met the beautiful Jeanne de la Salle Before long, Robert and Jeanne were meeting secretly, and eventually, she became his mistress. But Robert tired of her and made arrangements to leave Paris and return to Scotland.

Jeanne, desperate to stop him going without her, leaped at the front wheel of his carriage, and held on to the rim of the wheel with both hands. Losing his temper, Robert commanded the coachman to drive away, and Jeanne fell into the path of the carriage and was killed.

Robert Stuart returned to Scotland—and the ghost of Jeanne de la Salle came with him. She first appeared at Allanbank one night only three weeks after his return to England, startling the horses of his carriage by walking out of the trees and standing in the driveway as he approached.

After this, Pearlin Jean, as she was know, was seen regularly at Allanbank. When Robert married, Jean's ghost showed its displeasure by hurling furniture and ornaments around the great house.

Over a period of time, a total of seven clergymen tried to exorcise her ghost, but they all failed. In an account of the haunting, Robert recalled the last words Jeanne had ever spoken to him: "If you ever marry another woman, I shall come between you to the end of your days."

He tried another way to get rid of the ghost. Portraits of himself and his new wife hung in the house, and Robert hired an artist and commissioned him to paint a portrait of Jeanne from a detailed description he gave.

It depicted her wearing a dress of pearlin or thread-lace. This portrait was hung between his own portrait and that of his wife and subsequently, the ghost of Pearlin Jeanne left them in peace. But later, the picture of Jeanne was temporarily removed—and the haunting immediately began again.

Since Jock and Clarice, at least 20 people have seen the ghost of Pearlin Jean. For instance, a man named Thomas Blackadder was courting a girl who worked as a stillroom maid at Allanbank, when the ghost of Jeanne appeared to him as he was leaving the building and scared him so much that he never came back!

In 1963, she is said to have appeared to three visitors at

Allanbank and kept them awake all night by pacing up and down outside their rooms.

How did the ghost of Jeanne de la Salle travel from Paris to the wilds of Scotland?

Why does she still haunt the grim house of Allanbank, now that her lover has been dead over 200 years?

And when will her slight sad figure be seen flitting once more through the dark firs on an errand destined to remain a mystery for eternity . . . ?

PREVIEW OF DISASTER

The dream of John James Morley shook him into consciousness one gray February dawn and filled him with grim foreboding and a real and lasting fear.

John Morley was not a man of vivid imagination. Certainly he would have scoffed at the idea that he had any special kind of psychic power. Yet on the early morning of February 10, 1938, he had a violent and spine-chilling glimpse of the future in which he was to have a major part.

This preview of the future came to him in a dream. He returned home late one night after a shift at the pit, and went to bed. The dream he had was so vivid that it jerked him awake. When his wife, wakened by his trembling, asked what was the matter, he told her of his nightmare.

He had been traveling as a passenger on a bus and seemed to be going from Doncaster to Swinton. But strangely, what he recalled of the countryside through which the bus passed often did not seem at all familiar—until they reached one point on the journey that he recognized vividly.

This was a place where the road swept around in a complete half-circle—a dangerous bend where traffic needed to slow almost to a crawl. Then the road dipped suddenly and descended steeply for about a quarter of a mile to

eventually join another road that ran straight for two miles.

In his dream, Morley, looking out of the bus window was able to see this other road—lying about 100 feet below. Between the two, rough grassland formed a hillside which was dotted with ancient tree stumps and bushes whose leaves were blackened by the grime of the industrial area.

In the dream, he suddenly realized that the bus had not slowed speed to negotiate the bend, and in a sudden panic he sat forward clutching the seat in front of him. As he looked around him he saw mirrored in the faces of the other passengers the fear and panic he felt.

The bus spun around the dangerous corner without slackening speed. The front nearside wheel scraped the edge of the road, mounted a narrow grass verge and hit a projecting tree stump.

Then the world seemed to spin and cavort as the bus plunged over the drop, turning over as it shot down the hillside to finally land with a sickening crash on its roof.

There were screams and shouts of agony, and then came a grim and deadly silence. Morley picked himself up, bruised and shaken, though apparently not seriously hurt. But terrible chaos lay all around him; corpses were scattered on the grass, and he found himself standing outside the bus by the shattered door.

Then he awoke. . . .

His wife tried vainly to convince him that it had been nothing more than a nightmare following a heavy meal. But during the days that followed, Morley was haunted by the dream and he grew increasingly convinced that it was an omen.

He became nervous of traveling even short distances on busses. Then after three weeks, the fear gradually left him and he managed to push the awful nightmare firmly into the back of his mind.

It was the following month—in March—that Morley went to the nearby town of Mexborough one day to visit a handicraft shop. His shopping completed he caught a bus at eleven A.M. to travel back to his home in Swinton—

then he suddenly realized as the bus set off that he was aboard the wrong one—a line which took a different, longer route to Swinton. But he stayed on the bus, knowing that he would still be able to get off at a stop quite near to where he lived.

The bus, en route, had to go up a hill known locally as Roman Terrace Hill—a stretch of road paved in greasy, treacherous cobbles.

And suddenly, dramatically, it happened . . . a heavy truck came thundering down the hill at breakneck speed. As the bus in which Morley was traveling reached a point about halfway up the hill, the truck swerved, and plunged head-on into the side of the bus.

The force of the crash knocked the bus off the road, and it crashed over onto its side and rolled down a grassy slope—dotted with tree stumps and blackened bushes.

Morley clutched the seat in front of him. All around was a confusion of crashing bodies and the helpless screaming of the injured and the timeless silence of the dead.

Eventually, the bus came to rest on its roof. Through a shattered window Morley could see people leaving their cars on the road above and scrambling down the bank towards the wreck.

He was lying beneath a seat, but he was alive, and as far as he could tell, not seriously injured. He smashed the remaining glass with his shoe and climbed out of the shattered vehicle.

John Morley was one of seven people who were able to greet the rescuers who rushed towards them. Eight of the passengers were seriously hurt and four were dead.

As Morley stood by the shattered door of the bus, he saw in his mind's eye the cameo from his dream. It was identical down to the last detail. He watched them lift out the dead and broken bodies. The nightmare had come true . . . a thousand times more horrific in real life than in the surrealistic confusion of an early morning dream. . . .

A NATION'S MOST HATED GHOST

The ghost that has been called the most vicious in England, dwells in Littlecote Hall, a stately Georgian mansion amid Wiltshire's mellow hills.

"Most spirits are benign," explains Dr. Mervyn Horton, who has investigated the specter of Littlecote Hall on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research, "but the one here is an exception. It is sisister and cruel. No wonder people have been afraid of it for generations."

The ghost of Will Darrell was last seen in 1958 by a man in seemingly perfect health, who died suddenly and inexplicably, a week later.

At least four other people, say SPR investigators, have died or committed suicide after seeing the ghost of the man known as "Wild Will."

Will Darrell—who came to be known as Wild Will because of his ruthlessness and his way of living—was master of Littlecote in the 18th century. By all accounts, Will was really wild—and utterly selfish. He conducted orgies, committed bloody crimes and with bribery and corruption escaped all penalties for his sins.

But after death there was no escape for Wild Will—for his tortured spirit still haunts the scene of his orgies and crimes, apparently unable to find rest or peace. And his unhappy ghost still flits from the ante-chamber where he committed murder to the spot outside where his horse threw him to his death at the sight of the child Wild Will had murdered. . . .

His specter—and the sad ghost of a woman once wronged by the heartless Darrell—have both been seen by countless witnesses in the past 50 years.

In 1950, Littlecote came into the hands of the Wills family, who, from the time they moved in, have been constantly troubled by ghosts—of both Wild Will and the girl he wronged.

Once, when Major George Wills was staying at Little-

cote, his dog—normally, docile and well-behaved, began to bark furiously in the middle of the night. The animal stood in front of the closed bedroom door, quivering with terror.

When the Major got out of bed and opened the door, he saw at once "the ghost of a woman dressed only in a shift—wringing her ghostly hands in seeming despair. She seemed," said the major, "to be desperately searching for someone."

On another occasion, the ghost of Wild Will was seen in the ante-chamber where, it was alleged, he had once murdered an unwanted child by throwing it on the fire.

As late as 1938, a caretaker at the hall, noticed what he called "ghostly blood-stains" beginning to appear upon the floor in front of the fireplace into which the child was said to have been thrown.

On yet another occasion, the ghost of Wild Will was seen at the place where he had died when he was thrown from his frightened horse.

Troubled by these unhappy ghosts, the Wills family have probed intensively into the ghastly events that had happened many years before, when Darrell was master of the stately home. Known as a rake and villain, Wild Will had lured many girls to Littlecote. When one girl who had become his mistress was with child, Wild Will planned to kill it.

He had the local midwife kidnapped and brought to Littlecote. The moment the infant was delivered, Wild Will snatched the child and threw it into the blazing fire. The midwife was naturally horrified, but was threatened with death if she ever disclosed what she had witnessed.

Later, however, she found the courage to report what she had seen—but only when she was lying on her deathbed. Unfortunately the magistrate to whom she told her story and who wrote down her testimony happened to be Wild Will's cousin!

So Wild Will escaped justice—largely, it was believed, through bribery and corruption—returning to Littlecote and continuing his wild and reckless career—until death caught

up with him—and he was doomed to wander eternally around the scene of his crimes.

He was thrown from his horse in the courtyard of Littlecote, gravely injured, and died soon afterwards—but not before he had muttered to a priest that he and his horse had suddenly been confronted by the ghost of the baby he had killed.

Now the ghost of the murderer has joined that of his victim, and for 200 years he has frightened and disturbed those who live in the shadow of the Wiltshire Downs.

Surely it is too much to hope that the malign influence of Wild Will is finally over?

PEACE FOR THE MURDERER

For one brief second, as Dr. William Kilner looked out through his study windows, he thought he glimpsed a tall, broadshouldered man standing in the roadway watching him. Then the figure was gone.

Perhaps it had been a shadow, the doctor thought. Or some trick of the fading daylight . . . and he turned back to his desk.

But shortly afterwards, he heard his front doorbell tinkling, then one of the maids came into the study to say that somebody had called to speak to him. It wasn't a patient, the girl said; she had never seen the man before.

As he walked down the long hallway towards the front door, Kilner could see the man silhouetted against the dim light outside. It was a tall, broadshouldered man wearing a high hat and muffled in an overcoat. Then as the maid followed the doctor, carrying the lamp from his study—the figure vanished.

And from that moment onwards, in December, 1856, Dr. Kilner's house was subjected to a series of terrifying incidents for which he could offer no explanation. For the figure he had seen had not been a man who had walked away . . . but a ghost who had come to stay.

Soon the news of the haunting of Dr. Kilner's house in

Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, was the most sensational case in Britain.

It started mildly enough, with doors opening and slamming shut again, when there was nobody to be seen—and no drafts to have caused the incidents. Then the servants began hearing voices—a man's voice, which kept whispering urgently to them in all the rooms and corridors around the premises.

But they were never able to hear clearly what the voice was saying. Yet they were all quite certain that it was pleading with them . . . seeking their help and understanding. Above all, they agreed unanimously that it was the voice of a tormented soul.

However, as nobody was ever able to hear what the voice was saying, a few weeks later it seemed that the spirit had given up all hope. For it started to sob, and the sobbing was always accompanied by a loud hammering noise . . . just as if somebody was beating his fists against a wall in sheer, complete frustration and disappointment.

This wailing reached such a pitch that none of the household were able to sleep until it ceased, and sometimes it went on sobbing until shortly before dawn.

Soon Dr. Kilner was having servant trouble, for as the haunting continued his servants started to leave and he was finding it impossible to replace them.

Then one evening when he returned from the local hospital he heard somebody screaming. Running upstairs to his study he found one of his maid servants standing there. The girl was almost fainting . . . and she was still screaming.

Dr. Kilner shook her firmly and she did faint. Then he carried her back into the servant's quarters and laid her on her bed. When the girl was revived, she told him that she'd gone to the study when the bell had rung in the kitchen.

She'd expected to see him there, she explained, but there was nobody there at all. But just as she was about to leave, she looked across at the bell rope . . . and there was a hand still clutching it—a white, withered-looking hand—but there was no body attached to it! When she screamed,

the hand released the bell rope and pointed at a cabinet in the far corner of the study. That was the last thing the girl remembered, until she came to in her bedroom.

The physician gave her a sedative. Then after dinner, he went slowly up the stairs to his study, lit the lamp, then sat behind his desk, staring across at the cabinet.

There was a black lacquered box on top of the cabinet, and Dr. Kilner knew only too well what was inside the box. It was a human skull.

It was the skull of William Corder, the murderer who had been executed at Bury Gaol in 1828, for the sensational murder of Maria Marten, in the Red Barn at Polestead.

After Corder's death his body had been preserved by the prison doctor and had eventually passed into Dr. Kilner's hands. A few years before the haunting of his home, Dr. Kilner had bequeathed the body to a medical school. But he had kept the skull, because it had been an unusual, interesting anatomical specimen.

He'd had it cleaned and burnished, then placed it in the lacquered box. For sometime after that he'd been uncomfortably aware of a feeling of guilt at his action . . . but soon that had passed, and the skull lay forgotten in the box.

Ever since the alleged ghost had started its activities, Kilner had tried to ignore the whole affair and laugh it off as "superstitious nonsense on the part of the servants." But before long, there was too much evidence against such a theory.

Dr. Kilner began to think that it was Corder's ghost which had entered his home, and was pleading with him to return the skull to the body. But that was impossible, for the skeleton itself had been separated and scattered nobody could know where, by a generation of students.

Apart from that, if he attempted to dispose of the skull by burying it properly the publicity of such an act could spark off an outcry of indignation. For murderers were usually buried inside the prison walls, not in churchyards.

Also the doctor who had held back Corder's body in the

first place could have been in serious trouble. Kilner decided to wait and see if the ghost would eventually give up its activities.

Corder's soul, however, was not going to rest in peace, for it only launched itself on a series of savage and vindictive attacks about Dr. Kilner's house. It caused havoc with the furnishings and terrified all who stayed there.

Then almost a year after the haunting started, Dr. Kilner was roused from his sleep one night by somebody walking stealthily past his bedroom door. He crept out into the hallway and saw a tall, broadshouldered man disappearing along the corridor towards his study.

The figure vanished in some shadows just before the study door and all that emerged into the patch of moonlight was a white, withered looking hand which grasped the study doorhandle firmly and hurled the door open.

Suddenly there was a thunderous crash inside the study. The doctor seized a heavy walking stick and ran in to confront the intruder, but there was nobody there. . . .

Yet lying at his feet was the polished skull and behind it fragments of the smashed lacquered box were strewn everywhere. Somebody—or something—had shattered the box on the floor and released the skull.

Some time later, a friend of the doctor, who was in the Church, agreed to have Corder's skull buried in a churchyard. Prayers were said and a proper funeral service was carried out, but no tombstone marks the spot.

However, that seemed to be all that Corder's spirit had wanted, for almost immediately the normal peace and tranquility returned to the Kilner home . . . so it was assumed that William Corder rested in peace ever afterwards.

THE HUMAN DYNAMO

It was with great reluctance that Dr. Lewis Ashcroft agreed to give an appointment to Jennie Morgan. Ashcroft was busy and sought-after. He had an extensive Harley

Street practice and was a consultant nerve specialist to three London hospitals.

He also had no time for medical mysteries, and Jennie Morgan was reckoned to be one of the most celebrated who ever lived.

Dr. Ashcroft had heard about "high voltage humans," people with a totally inexplicable capacity for generating enormous amounts of electricity, but he had never met one, and he didn't particularly want to.

And yet he had agreed to meet Jennie, the girl they called the "human dynamo," the girl whose tiny frame was said to contain 20,000 volts of electrical power.

There have been about 30 cases of "human dynamos." Sometimes the condition is accompanied by other strange powers—the ability to magnetize metal—or even to forecast the future!

No one knows why. The riddle of the high-voltage humans remains a complete mystery. Even to Dr. Ashcroft.

He made no secret of the fact that he disbelieved the whole business. When he met her, he immediately reached out to take her hand.

A few moments later, when he opened his eyes, the doubting doctor found himself on his back, surrounded by his assistants . . . Jennie Morgan had done it again!

Jennie was a frail, nervous girl in her middle teens when she met Dr. Ashcroft in 1943. But the strange powers which attracted so much attention, were not noticeably present until she was about fourteen.

Then, for no apparent reason, Jennie turned into a powerful storage battery! Sparks flew from her fingertips when she touched anything made of metal and the voltage was so high that the spark was painful to her. The sparks were doubly painful to anyone who chanced to touch her under conditions which enabled the electricity to leap through their bodies.

Needless to say, Jennie had few close friends. But, by 1950, the strange "electrical endowment" had disappeared as mysteriously as it had arrived and she became a normal young woman—much to her delight.

Medical scientists have now a complete dossier on another human storage battery; Jeanette Dogny of Geneva, Switzerland.

In 1948, when she was seventeen and living with her parents and four brothers, she became ill, lost her appetite and began to grow thin. Doctors could find nothing seriously wrong with her, but she continued to dwindle until her weight dropped to slightly less than ninety pounds.

Then she underwent a mental change as drastic and baffling as the physical one had been. She began to go into trances. While in this state, body rigid, eyes fixed and staring, she would talk in detail of places and scenes which she had never visited.

For a year and a half, she remained in this condition. But when her physical and mental health eventually returned to normal, she discovered that she had acquired an unwanted propensity for shocking anyone who touched her.

Oddly enough, she not only emitted considerable voltage, but she seemed to be magnetized as well! When she picked up any metal article susceptible to magnetic attraction, she couldn't let go, and someone had to forcibly pull the article from her open hand.

As in the case of Jennie Morgan, the electrical charge left when Jeanette grew up.

Her case has been studied by physicians and several reports made to several medical associations.

Another case which still utterly baffles the experts is that of sixteen-year-old Walther Teutsch, a student at the University of Berlin, where his unusual ability to act as a human magnet soon attracted the attention of the science faculty. They in turn felt the need for more highly trained investigators, so they invited various medical and electrical experts to view the remarkable young man.

Their report indicated that they were equally baffled by Walther's ability to make iron or steel objects dangle from his fingertips as though from a powerful magnet.

Metal rods half an inch in diameter and a foot long were no problem at all, and when iron filings were placed in a

glass beaker, Walther could lift the beaker with the tips of three fingers pressed against the glass. When one of the fingertips were pulled away, it caused an audible click.

The electrical phenomenon which jinxed these people was similar to that which had plagued a young Dubliner, Patrick Carberry, some years earlier. Like the others, the phenomenon was not subject to his will and the voltage was at its peak in the morning after he had had a good night's rest, fading gradually as the day wore on.

On cold days especially, when most people are subject to accumulations of static electricity, Patrick Carberry had the unfortunate faculty of becoming so heavily charged that walking became like treading on fly paper!

His case, too, was thoroughly investigated. But in this as in the others, science found only the evidence . . . not the answers. Whether this can be remedied, only time will tell.

TRAPPED—BY THE BOY HE KILLED

He was about seven years old, and he was well-dressed and fair-haired. He was the sort of boy of whom any father would have been proud—and yet when Tom Jevons watched the frail figure run across the lawns of the big house, his blood ran cold.

The boy was moving faster than seemed possible for someone of his age. But what really set the gardener's hair standing on end was the realization that the figure he was watching was *floating* above the ground. . . .

Though he didn't know it at the time, Jevons was watching just one act of the strangest ghost stories on record—one of the few recorded occasions when the spirit of a young person has returned from the grave in search of vengeance.

The mansion was in Britain, not far from Exmouth in Devon, and it had once been owned by a family named Harris. Socially, they were not particularly important, but they were extremely rich and their land stretched many miles on all sides of the mansion.

Jevons, a local gardener, knew that the grounds were the

finest for miles around and since it was spring—April, 1913, in fact—he decided to take a chance and look around the flower beds without asking permission. If he was caught, he could always explain that he was genuinely interested in the garden.

He hadn't been there for five minutes when he first saw the boy, apparently heading towards a huge oak tree on one of the lawns. As he reached the tree, he remained quite still for a while—as though pointing to something—then suddenly he vanished into thin air.

Jevons was petrified by what he had seen. For a full two minutes, he was rooted to the spot. But soon he forced his legs to move and he tried to tell himself that the boy could not have disappeared—that he must have gone around the great oak and out of sight.

But when Tom reached the tree there was no sign of a boy—or of anybody else. Whereupon Tom forgot about wanting to inspect the fine gardens. He just took to his heels and fled.

When he finally stopped, he leaned against a stile to recover his breath and he was still there when a stranger came down the road and spotted him. The man came over to him: "You look ill," he said. "Is there anything I can do to help you?"

Tom shook his head. "I'll be all right in a minute."

But the man persisted and soon Tom admitted that he had had a nasty shock. He told of his encounter with the phantom boy. Then, for the first time, he noticed that the man who had stopped to speak to him was a clergyman.

"That must have been the ghost of young Richard Tarwell you saw," he commented. "I've heard that his ghost can still be seen sometimes—but, to be honest, you're the first man I've come across to admit having seen it!"

From this chance encounter Tom Jevons learned the strange and fascinating legend of the boy who had returned as a ghost to get his revenge on a man who had badly treated him, and had finally murdered him.

The boy had gone, in the mid-18th century, when the mansion was the family seat of the wealthy Harris family,

to work as a kitchen boy at the big house. Much of the time Mr. Harris was in London, staying at his town house in Sloane Square, and while he was away his butler, Richard Morris, whom he trusted implicitly, was always left in complete charge of the mansion.

One day, receiving an urgent message from Morris, Mr. Harris returned to the mansion with all speed.

Morris said that two thieves had broken into the house and that, when he surprised them, they had attacked him and tied him up. He also reported that a boy he had employed recently, and who had slept in the kitchen, had vanished since the robbery in which a large quantity of valuable silver had been taken.

"I am sure that the boy was planted here to let the thieves in," declared the butler. "The doors were locked as I always lock them, and there was no other way they could have entered. The boy's name was Richard Tarwell."

Morris also admitted that at first he had accused two footmen of plotting a robbery and they now wanted to give their notice. But Harris persuaded the two footmen—Eames and Barnwell—to stay on by giving them a wage increase.

That night, Harris went around with the butler to make sure all the doors and windows were secured. For the first time, he learned that Morris locked his pantry each night—and this gave him food for thought. He made a note to ask Morris where he kept the keys after he had locked up each night. It could be very important.

That night he slept in a guest room, and sometime in the night he was abruptly awakened, and was amazed to see a boy standing near his bed.

"What on earth do you want at this time of night?" he demanded.

But the boy did not speak. He merely beckoned, turned and indicated the door.

It soon became clear to Mr. Harris the boy wished him to follow, so he got out of bed, put on a dressing-gown and went downstairs.

It was then that he suddenly noticed that the boy did

not make any sound as he walked. This struck him as being rather odd—but he assured people afterwards, at no time did he feel any sensation of fear.

He followed the boy and eventually they came to a large oak tree in the garden. Here the boy stood and pointed down to the earth beneath the tree. Then he vanished.

Harris suddenly realized that this boy was Richard Tarwell. Or was it his ghost? Whatever it was, Harris knew the figure had desperately been trying to tell him something.

The next morning, he instructed his two footmen to dig under the oak tree. There the body of the boy was unearthed.

Harris then learned that Morris always kept keys in a drawer in his bedside table. It meant that anybody in the house would have had to steal them from there to admit his accomplices—a very difficult feat for an inexperienced boy to perform.

When Morris saw the body of the boy and was confronted by the police, he broke down and confessed. He had two accomplices who were the thieves and it was he who had let them into the house. Richard Tarwell had surprised them so he had to be killed.

Morris was found guilty at Exeter Assizes and was hanged. His accomplices were never found.

But Morris went to the scaffold with the unique knowledge that he had been brought to justice by the ghost of his own victim.

And old Tom Jevons? His place in this story is unique, too. He is the last recorded person to have seen the restless spirit of young Richard Tarwell.

NIGHTMARE AT THE JOLLY MILLER

Jeremy Collier was bluff, hearty and very sensible. As a representative for a large, North of England wholesale company he was used to traveling alone, and certainly he wasn't the sort of man who indulged in fanciful daydreams.

It is essential to make this point clear at the very begin-

ning. For the experience Collier underwent in May, 1951, seems so outrageous that it would be easy to dismiss it as the product of an imaginative mind.

It is also important to emphasize that when he checked in for the night at an old inn called The Jolly Miller, near Dudley in Worcestershire, he regarded his stay as completely routine—apart from the location, varying hardly at all from the hundreds of other nights he had spent while working away from home. Yet Collier's experience that night stands as one of the classic psychical case-histories of all time.

The story that emerged from it is one of the rare authenticated cases of a poltergeist taking over a whole building only to be put to flight, not by the efforts of priest or clerics, but by other equally unexplained supernatural phenomena!

Collier parked his car in the hotel lot, enjoyed the best meal he had eaten for days, and had a few drinks before he went to his room for the night. But he was destined to spend a rather disturbed night.

If anyone had suggested to him that one day he would encounter something from an unknown world, he would have said they were off their heads. But this was to be the night he changed his mind.

Afterwards, everything was brilliantly clear and vivid to him. He was able to recall events precisely as they had happened.

He awoke during the night, glanced at his luminous traveling clock and saw that it was ten minutes past two. He knew that he should have been warm in bed, but he felt icy cold all over. He experienced an odd sensation which he later described as if every tiny hair on his body was standing up rigid with shock. He lay still for a while—then eased himself up on his elbows. Next, he heard a weird, soft whistling sound and got the impression that a wind had suddenly blown right through the room and across his bed.

Then he saw them . . . vague misty figures. But he could identify a man dressed in old-fashioned clothes, and beside him the equally unreal figure of a small girl.

As he watched, the figures assumed clearer outlines. So vivid did they become that he thought they were real, solid, live human beings. But somehow, at the same time, he knew something strange was happening.

He watched them as if transfixed. Later he estimated the scene had lasted ten minutes. So clear were the two specters now that he could see the man was wearing a brown suit, and the child was a pretty girl with lovely flaxen hair.

Collier swore afterwards that he wasn't in any way alarmed. Not even when the figures glided across the room and vanished through the wall did he feel afraid.

By the morning, he was even willing to believe it had been a nightmare. But finally he plucked up enough courage to tell the hotel owner the whole story—and what he learned wiped away the cynicism he had acquired in his lifetime.

Some years before, he was told, the inn had been haunted by a particularly malignant poltergeist whose activities brought terror and alarm to anyone who had to stay in the inn for any length of time.

Guests were hurled out of their beds in the dead of night, and filled with terror by dreadful noises; furniture and crockery were tossed violently about.

With the arrival of the poltergeist, the luck of the innkeeper at that time changed drastically and everything began to go wrong for him. People stopped coming to stay there. Then his wife died, leaving him to look after their young daughter.

There has, for centuries, been a firm belief that poltergeists are invariably attracted by the presence of children—and when someone told the innkeeper of this, he became even more depressed and moody.

Finally, with no guests coming to the inn, no customers, and heavily in debt, the distracted man committed suicide. But first he killed his child. . . . Immediately the poltergeist left the inn and was never seen again.

But, in his place came two new ghosts to haunt the inn

of tragedy . . . the spirits of the innkeeper and his little daughter.

Were these the figures that Jeremy Collier had seen? Certainly his detailed descriptions tallied in every respect with the features of the innkeeper and his daughter.

Investigators went into the matter thoroughly. They found portraits of the man and his daughter, and the comparison with Collier's observations were uncanny. Collier himself had never visited the inn before. Its history had been kept secret and there was no obvious way in which he could have read about the tragedy previously.

Certainly, as Jeremy Collier drove away from the Jolly Miller that morning, he took with him a story which he knew few of his customers would ever believe.

VICTORIAN MADNESS

For some reason, the most popular and persistent supernatural phenomenon in Victorian times was the poltergeist. There were thousands of reports of their weird activities, sometimes playful, sometimes frightening, in houses all over England, for almost a century.

Many reports were nothing more than inventions by lively imaginations and very often these "ghosts" were created to scare people from places where smugglers operated. But there still remain countless cases where no rational explanation can be found.

One of the strangest stories of these began in 1883 on a farm called The Woods, some ten miles from Shrewsbury. The farmer's wife, Mrs. Hampson, was boiling an egg in the kitchen when suddenly the saucepan flew off the stove and shot across the kitchen.

Startled, Mrs. Hampson leaped back, narrowly escaping being scalded by the boiling water. Then the heavy kitchen table tilted violently, and sent a pile of crockery crashing onto the stone floor.

Once the first shock had passed, the woman took to her heels and fled, screaming to her neighbor's cottage. This

man, Mr. Lea was greatly concerned and sent a message to Mr. Hampson advising him to hurry home.

What happened next was even more frightening, for when the farmer reached the house, he was horrified to see the building on fire. Huge flames were shooting out of every window. In the hope of at least salvaging something from the conflagration, he dashed inside—then stopped. For there was no sign whatsoever of a fire.

Just when he was beginning to wonder if he was losing his mind, the whole house seemed to erupt into what he afterwards described as a wild and frightening devil-dance.

Flames shot up all around the kitchen and the room became a mass of fire. Then he heard—unmistakably—a loud crack like a pistol shot and ducking for shelter, he was sure that some maniac must have been prowling about intent upon arson and murder!

Then all the crockery in the place started to fly through the air, so that he had to shield his face with his arms.

Mr. Lea, who had arrived and witnessed everything, said afterwards it was just as if a war had suddenly broken out inside the farmhouse. And when he began to help rescue Mr. Hampson, had felt a violent blow on the head.

As if this were not enough, Mr. Lea was horrified to find himself being *chased* across the room by the table. He only escaped injury by leaping through the back door, because the table was stopped from following him out into the yard by the narrow doorway!

The awful and frightening violence of his particular poltergeist was absolutely beyond human comprehension. A lamp was thrown to the floor and smashed, a clock was hurled to the floor, jugs, vases, flower-pots and lumps of coal from the fireplace flew around in the air and exploded like shrapnel all around the terrified Hampsons and their neighbor. The poltergeist must have possessed an incredible inhuman strength, because the heavy furniture was hurled as easily as if it was all feathers.

There was a 13-year-old girl in the house looking after the Hampson's baby. Suddenly the clothing of both this young girl and the child caught fire. Screaming and slapping at the flames, she grabbed the baby and ran from the house to Mr. Lea's home—but even there the psychic flames attacked them again.

When the two shawls were plunged into pails of water the garments sprang out onto the floor and burst into flames again. With the Leas and the Hampsons and the girl now on the point of hysteria, Mrs. Lea ran to the haunted house to get a bottle of brandy and she was very nearly felled by a large dish which hurled itself viciously at her head!

Police were called in and reporters flocked to the haunted farm, and hundreds of people from miles around came to the place.

Then strangely, almost as if it was satisfied, the poltergeist ceased its activities . . . and the strange haunting ended forever.

MARIO SIGNORELLI'S 2,000-YEAR-OLD SWEETHEART

Mario Signorelli's love for a beautiful young girl has led him to one of the most incredible archeological finds of the century. But it's an even stranger romance, for the girl who stole his heart away is an 18-year-old called Ursena—and she died more than 2,000 years ago.

Mario is a 63-year-old schoolmaster in Viterbo, a small village about 40 miles from Rome, and he saw Ursena for the first time a few years ago, when he was walking through the hills near Riello. These are notorious hills, avoided by many of the local peasants who claim that they are haunted by a girl's ghost—a girl who would walk up a steep hillside, carrying an urn on her shoulder, and then vanish.

So many other people had described the girl and the urn, that when Mario saw her, he was determined to see where she went—and he followed her. Just before reaching the spot where she had always been seen to disappear before, Ursena turned to smile beguilingly at Mario.

Obviously she wanted him to follow her and he did . . . then found himself walking along a dark tunnel, which was concealed behind some trees. A few moments later, he had

reached the heart of the mountain. Ursena had vanished, but lying at his feet were the fragments of an urn, identical to the one she had been carrying. The fragments, which he took back to Viterbo with him, were identified by several people as being similar to the urn the ghost girl had been seen with.

But Mario's discovery turned out to be something greater than just a concealed cavern, for the pottery fragments were identified by an archeologist in Rome as being Etruscan—and very valuable, for there are few specimens from that particular period in the world today.

Further exploration of the tunnel revealed that it was only one of many which honeycombed the mountain, leading to a long-lost city—the burial city of the ancient Etruscans.

Though Mario has not seen the girl Ursena again, he has heard her spirit voice communicating with him, as she tells him about herself, and her former life on this Earth. Moreover, he claims, she has introduced him to others of her race. From his conversations with these ghosts, Mario has written several books based on eye-witness accounts "of the life and customs of ancient Etruscany," a civilization about which very little is really known—except to Mario Signorelli.

However, though many European historians and archeologists say that Mario Signorelli is "a crank," they do have to admit that much of what he says about the Etruscan culture is possible. And the evidence he has given them has proved very valuable.

How much of a crank *is* he? From his contacts with the ghosts of Etruscans, Mario has written details of Etruscan language, folksongs, and their strange religions and superstitions.

The spirits have told him about other burial sites, fortifications, paintings and other works of art. And the strange thing is that much of what he claims to have been told has been checked by experts in the past three years and a lot of it is correct!

But what about Ursena? Why has she never materialized

again? Mario doesn't worry too much about that, because he is always aware of her presence, and appears to have proved this in many strange ways.

One day when he was leading a German journalist to the cave, he almost stepped on a poisonous snake. The journalist and his photographer both saw it before he did—it struck at Mario and missed. But before it could strike again a weird thing happened.

The snake seemed to stiffen as a girl's voice was heard shouting as from a great distance away. Yet though it sounded so far away, it rang out from immediately *beside* them. And at the words it spoke, the snake turned and slithered away into the brush. Both the Germans spoke fluent Italian; they'd been sent to try to expose Mario as a fraud—yet the words the voice uttered were in an unknown language.

And it was certainly the words which had frightened off the snake. Mario walked on into the cave without even appearing to notice the reptile, and when they were returning down the hill after inspecting the caves they saw a similar snake lying a few yards away. It was dead, but there was nothing to show what had killed it. A few minutes later, they questioned Mario about it, but he only smiled and said: "Oh, I know about that—it was Ursena who killed it."

This incident could have been a convenient coincidence for Mario to substantiate his claims to having contacted the Etruscan dead, had not another inexplicable incident happened a few weeks later.

On that occasion he was showing several archeologists around the caves when he stepped into a patch of marshy ground inside one of the burial chambers. The mud clung so tenaciously that when he pulled himself free, one of his shoes remained behind beneath the surface.

Although his companions probed about for it in the light of their lamps, they just couldn't find the shoe. So Mario continued his guided tour with one unshod foot.

An hour or two later, they emerged from another cave onto the hillside, and one of the archeologists stopped and

pointed to Mario's mud-covered shoe lying by the entrance to the cave.

There was no doubt whatsoever that it was the shoe he had lost inside the caverns. There was no possibility that he could have slipped away from the party and placed it there himself, for they had been guided by him all the time. As Mario bent down and picked it up he looked as surprised as anybody else. Then he wiped the wet mud away and slipped it onto his foot.

As he led the party of mystified archeologists back to Viterbo, he made no comment at all on the strange reappearance of the shoe that he had lost earlier. When they questioned him about it later, he just shrugged the questions off.

After all, what was the point of trying to explain, to those who cannot believe, that Ursena had returned his shoe. . . .

HER MOTHER CAME TO SAY GOODBY

A few days after arriving in Cornwall on vacation in June, 1900, one of Lady Waldegrave's maids became ill. She was a Scottish girl, Helen Alexander, and when a doctor was called in he immediately diagnosed typhoid fever.

As there wasn't a nurse available, one of the local girls, Frances Redell, who was working as a maid in the same house, was given the job of nursing the sick girl. But as her condition became worse Frances Redell was asked to sit up with Helen at night, while other maids attended to her during the day.

Then about four o'clock one morning as Frances was preparing some medicine for the sick girl, she heard the door bell ringing. Hurrying across the hall, she opened the door. A cold draft of air swept past her . . . but there was nobody there.

Believing that she must have imagined it all, Frances hurried back up the stairs to give Helen Alexander her medicine. To her surprise, somebody followed her into the room.

It was a stranger—a tall, plump woman, wearing a long nightgown over a red flannel petticoat, and she was carrying an unusually designed candlestick in her hands.

Frances had never seen the woman before, but obviously Helen Alexander had. For as the woman bent anxiously over the sick girl, Helen's eyes fluttered open, a smile crossed her face and she gave a sigh of relief.

After smoothing Helen's hot, fevered face with her hands, the woman turned away from the bed, raised a finger to her lips cautioning Frances to stay silent, then slipped quietly from the bedroom.

Almost immediately afterwards, the sick girl's condition became so much worse that the doctor was called. Then Helen Alexander died.

Her family arrived in Cornwall from Scotland a few days later for the funeral and Frances Redell and another maid met them. But when Frances saw Mrs. Alexander the color drained away from her face—because the dead girl's mother was the woman Frances had seen in the bedroom shortly before the girl died.

Frances had already described her strange experience to Lady Waldegrave, but it was thought best not to mention the incident to the grieved mother. After the funeral, however, the story was told to the dead girl's sister.

She stated that her mother did have a nightgown and a red flannel petticoat exactly like those Frances Redell had seen the "ghost" wearing. Asked if her mother had a candlestick, the sister described one exactly like that which Miss Redell claimed to have seen.

One further strange detail was that Helen Alexander had refused to write home about her illness, saying that she would soon be better.

Yet on the evening before Helen's death, her mother had remarked to the sister: "I'm worried about Helen. I have a strong feeling that she is very ill."

Helen Alexander's mother had never left Scotland until she came down for her daughter's funeral. Yet before she returned to Scotland, Mrs. Alexander stared at the maid and said slowly: "You know, ever since I've been here, I've

had the most curious feeling that we've met before somewhere."

The girl could only shake her head and say quietly that she'd never ever left her home town in Cornwall.

THE SPECTER OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

John MacAllister decided he'd done enough work for one day, and picking up a lamp he walked from his office towards the main hallway of Leeds Public Library. It was about 11 o'clock that night and MacAllister knew that he was alone in the building . . . all his staff had gone home several hours earlier.

But as he walked into the library, he saw a man watching him from the end of a long passageway between the bookshelves. Shouting angrily at the intruder, MacAllister ran towards him—and the man vanished.

For a second or so, the librarian halted. He looked about him quite baffled . . . and then he saw the face looking at him again from between two bookcases. It was a pale face with deep sunken eyes . . . rather an alarming face. But as MacAllister moved towards the man again, the intruder ran off.

The sound of his footsteps echoed loudly as he ran down one side of the long line of bookcases, with John MacAllister racing after him down the other side. The librarian couldn't see the quarry, but he could hear him.

Suddenly a door slammed shut and the footsteps ceased. MacAllister guessed where the man had gone . . . into the small closet in the wall. It was the only place he could have gone.

Yet when the librarian pulled the door open and looked inside, there was nobody there. The only way out of the closet was by the doorway in which MacAllister was standing. There was a window, but it was only about 12 inches square and it was barred.

Before leaving for home, however, John MacAllister

searched every inch of the library but there was no one to be found . . . and he was a very puzzled man for the rest of that night.

In the morning, however, he had come nowhere near to solving the riddle—until he stopped to chat with a member of the library committee, the Rev. Charles Hargrove. When the vicar heard MacAllister's story and the description of the intruder, he smiled.

"Why, that was old Sternberg!" the vicar said immediately. MacAllister stared—for he knew that Vincent Sternberg, his predecessor, had died four years earlier in 1880.

But MacAllister had not known Sternberg, so the Rev. Hargrove produced a photograph—and MacAllister was astounded to find himself looking at the photograph of the mysterious intruder.

One night a few weeks later, a senior assistant in the library named Rowlatt, and a junior, Frank Pitts, were working late. At about ten o'clock they finished, and before leaving turned out the gas light in the room. The rest of the library was in darkness, but when they reached the bottom of the staircase Rowlatt looked back and saw that the light was on in the room they had just vacated.

He sent the boy, Pitts, back to turn it off. But when Pitts was just outside the office the light went out again. Rowlatt and Pitts both searched the room, but could find nobody there.

Nothing else unusual happened until April 1, 1885. At four in the afternoon of that day, Albert Edmunds, a new employee, went into the librarian's room and Mr. MacAllister mentioned to him that the table seemed to be making a strange noise.

Edmunds heard the noise himself—a strange bell-like sound as though made by a tuning fork. Then Edmunds said: "This must have something to do with old Sternberg's spook."

This caused the librarian to recall that he had read something about ghosts often being associated with anniversaries.

So MacAllister sent Rowlatt to make some inquiries. A few minutes later Rowlatt was back to say that Sternberg

had died between four and five o'clock on the first of April, 1880.

Rowlatt, who had worked in the library in Sternberg's time, remembered that there used to be on the table in the room an old cracked gong, which Sternberg would strike when he wanted one of his assistants.

The sound that was now being heard in the room was, Rowlatt said, exactly the same. But the gong was no longer in the library.

Later that night, Edmunds, Rowlatt and Pitts met in the librarian's office. Then they heard loud bumps coming from the wall. Using a system of knocks arranged with the supposed spirit, they asked some questions.

From answers which the spirit gave them, the three of them learned that when Sternberg had been alive he had not believed in a life after death. Now, his ghost declared, this was being held against him.

Afterwards, Sternberg's bell, which for several months continued to sound regularly, was heard by many members of the staff. But that bell only sounded for them; it was never heard by any members of the public. . . .

WHO DROPPED THE CIGAR-CASE?

Albert Renshaw was rather annoyed when the stranger jumped into his compartment just as the train was pulling out of Euston station; he was certain that the guard had locked the door from the outside. And as the stranger settled back in the seat facing Renshaw, then fell asleep clutching a large leather bag, he started to snore. To Renshaw this seemed to be the height of rudeness, for not only had he tipped the guard to lock the compartment door—and he was still certain that that had been done—but the compartment window quite clearly showed a reserved label in his name.

He'd booked the compartment entirely to himself, because he had a lot of paper work to get through during the

journey from London to the Midlands. And he certainly couldn't concentrate with some intruder snoring.

Soon, however, the elderly man woke up, smiled pleasantly enough at Renshaw and they started to chat. The stranger—Mr. Westingham—told Renshaw that he was a director of the Railway Company and was particularly interested in a branch line which was about to be opened. It was 1902 and there was a great deal of industrial expansion in England.

Westingham then added that he was carrying several thousand pounds in his bag which he was to lodge in a local bank to pay the expenses of the contractors working for the railway. "Are you not afraid to carry so much money about?" asked Renshaw. Westingham smiled. "No one would know. Besides, who would rob me? You don't look like a criminal."

Later, when Renshaw mentioned his destination, Westingham looked surprised. "By the way, I know that hotel. My niece is the landlady. Will you tell her that I hope the next time I come to stay she won't have such a huge fire in the Blue Room? Last time I visited her, she almost roasted me alive."

As the train pulled into a station, Westingham rose to leave, and handed Renshaw his card on which was the name James Westingham.

Then, once the man had gone, Renshaw noticed a cigar-case lying on the seat his companion had just vacated. Picking it up, he saw Westingham's name inscribed on it—so he jumped onto the station platform. He saw Westingham standing beneath a lamp near the exit talking to somebody. Renshaw noticed that the other man's hair was of a sandy color, and he could plainly see his face.

As he drew near, however, he lost sight of both figures in the crowds. When he asked the porter what had happened to them the porter replied that nobody had passed him. As the train was getting ready to leave, Renshaw had to hurry back to his carriage.

That evening, when he was having dinner at his hotel,

he said to his landlady: "I traveled down with an uncle of yours and he told me to give you a message . . ."

She stared at him, became greatly distressed and Renshaw realized that he had said something most unfortunate.

Later, her husband took him aside and said: "That message you gave my wife from her uncle. It's rather embarrassing, you see; he disappeared with £70,000 and nobody knows what happened to him."

Two of the other guests present overheard this conversation and later introduced themselves to Renshaw, as two other directors from the Railway Company. They asked him for any further particulars about the man he had met on the train.

"No," Renshaw said, "I can tell you no more, except that I saw him speaking to another man on the station platform."

Mr. Renshaw was invited to appear before the Railways Board to tell his strange story. He was in the middle of his tale when he suddenly exclaimed: "There's the man I saw with Westingham! The one with the sandy hair!"

For the man was sitting among the directors. He was the cashier of the Company, and surprised, he retorted: "But I was not there, I was on vacation."

It was such a strange reply that the directors insisted on the records being examined. They revealed that the cashier had not been on vacation at all. The man finally admitted that he had murdered James Westingham. He insisted that he had not meant to do so. He had known about the money Westingham had been carrying, and having met him at the station, he had persuaded him to take a short cut. As they passed through a quarry, the cashier had knocked him down. But Westingham's head struck a rock . . . and he died.

There only remained one mystery which has never been solved. How did Renshaw find James Westingham's cigar-case? Did a ghost *really* leave it behind?

WILL MAN VANISH IN 600 YEARS?

Will there be a third world war . . . and when? What is the life-span of the present civilization? What precise date will man walk on the moon?

All these questions were answered . . . over 400 years ago . . . and the results locked away for three centuries.

They form part of the most incredible—and accurate—series of prophesies ever made: forecasts which have now been made public for the first time, and are rocking the worlds both of science and psychic research.

They come from a man known as Ulrich of Mainz, son of a German barber. Ulrich was born in 1486. At 25 he moved to Paris. At 30, he was the most celebrated astrologer of his generation. He was greater than Nostradamus. Some said he was a new prophet sent by God.

In his early twenties, Ulrich was ordained a priest, but his preoccupation with the occult led to his excommunication at the age of 26.

He claimed that the events of the future were revealed to him in a series of visions. He included them in a book called *Arbor Mirabilis*, which is still suppressed by the Catholic Church, and Ulrich was working on the volume when he died in 1558.

Ulrich's predictions told of terror and bloodshed to come. He predicted the St. Bartholomew massacre of 1572, the Thirty Years' War, the war between France and Holland (1672-78): and the War of Spanish Succession (1700-1714).

He also foretold the Franco-Prussian conflict of 1870 and both the First and Second World Wars.

He wrote extensively about the Third World War, which he predicted would take place in the second year of the eighth decade of the twentieth century—in other words, 1982.

He wrote: "There shall be seen a great deluge of horror such as the world has not known until that time. Only if he treads the path of light shall man be saved."

Ulrich also dealt at length with the 1960s. "In the seventh year of the sixth decade (1967)," he wrote, "three kings will continue a dispute begun in the first decade; the King of Ivory, the King of Ebony, and the King of Gold.

"The first, if he does not take care, will be weakened by the blows of the other two.

"Then the Kings of Ebony and Gold will fight between themselves, for only they will be powerful enough to match one another. Two decades later, the King of Gold will emerge triumphant."

Experts say that the three kings undoubtedly represent three races: white, black and yellow. According to Ulrich the late 1960s would be characterised by an increase in tension between black and white—in America and Africa. After this, the victorious race will pit itself against the Chinese—and eventually lose.

Ulrich also predicted that in the fourth year of the sixth decade, "a despot of the east will be no more, yet the stones of the wall of his outer kingdom will hold firm."

This prediction fits exactly with the date of dismissal of Krushchev and the "stones that hold firm" could well be those of the Berlin Wall.

"In the eighth year of the sixth decade (1968)," Ulrich continues, "a new Christopher Columbus will set foot on an utterly arid land. His ship, designed to reach the Island of Gold, will instead reach the Island of Nothing.

"For there, where he lands, will be neither plants, nor animals, nor life of any kind. Burned by an infernal fire, frozen by a deadly cold, the voyager will know many nameless hazards."

There is only one event to which this prediction could possibly allude—a landing on the Moon—a year earlier than scheduled. Unfortunately, Ulrich gives no clue as to which nation will win the space race.

And what of the more distant future?

Ulrich writes that our descendants of the 21st century will live in huge ovoid skyscrapers, warmed by atomic power and with all the riches of the Earth at their disposal.

It will be "a paradise"—but it will last for barely a century.

By A.D. 2123, humanity will have reached the peak of its development, unable to go any further. Dominated by its own science, it will then begin a slow decline into the Abyss.

"You have a thousand years," wrote Ulrich in 1544. "Beyond that time, if you have not come upon the Truth, you will surely perish."

A thousand years. That means that if Ulrich is right, Mankind will disappear from the Earth about the year 2544.

Has man only got another 600 years on earth? Ironically this, the most intriguing prediction of all, is the one we won't be around to check . . . but then, neither will Ulrich of Mainz.

BRANDED BY A DEAD MAN'S HAND

One spring morning in 1900, Lady Beresford came downstairs to breakfast in the country house near Leamington Spa. For a few moments she ignored her husband, who was sitting at the table.

She stood by the French windows, gazing out over the lawns. When Sir Marcus Beresford saw his wife's pale, frightened face he immediately asked her what was wrong.

But she refused to explain what had alarmed her, assuring him that she was perfectly well. Then Sir Marcus saw the broad, black ribbon which was bound firmly around her wrist.

"Did you injure youself?" he asked, pointing to the ribbon, puzzled by her strange mood. She shook her head slowly.

Then suddenly, as if desperately afraid, she clutched the wrist with her other hand and looked at him pleadingly.

"Please Marcus—you must promise *never* to ask me about this ribbon," she said. "You will never again see me without it. If it concerned you as a husband to know why I wear it,

I would tell you. But it doesn't . . . so I beg you never to speak again on the subject."

Her husband was baffled—and worried, but he agreed.

After breakfast, Lady Beresford asked if the mail had come. She was told that it had not.

A few minutes later she called a servant to ask the same question and once more she was told that the mail had not arrived.

"Why are you so anxious about the mail?" her husband asked.

"I expect to hear that my brother died last Tuesday at four o'clock."

Before her husband could say anything in reply a servant brought in a letter sealed with black wax.

Sir Marcus opened the letter. It was from Lord Tyrone's steward to say that his lordship—Lady Beresford's brother—had died on Tuesday afternoon at four o'clock. . . .

Instead of being shocked, Lady Beresford smiled wanly. "I knew," she murmured. "And I wept for him all last night. But I have something else to say. This is *good* news—I believe I am expecting a child."

And eight months later she had a son, whom Sir Marcus survived by little more than four years.

After a few years of widowhood, Lady Beresford surprised her friends by marrying the vicar's son. It was not a happy marriage. After the birth of two daughters, Lady Beresford and her second husband parted for almost six years. Then after a reconciliation, she had another child.

A few days after this birth on her birthday, Lady Beresford had a visit from the priest by whom she had been baptised as a child. As he was an old friend, she asked him to spend the day with her.

"I am 48 today."

"No my Lady, you are only 47," replied the clergyman.

The woman stared at him, dismay spreading across her face and one hand flew to clutch the black ribbon which was still around her wrist. "Oh, no . . ." the words were only a whisper. "Then I am dying!"

She sent the priest to fetch her closest friend, Lady Betty

Cobb, and her son by Sir Marcus. This boy was 14 years old . . . and she told them both an incredible story.

Almost eight months before the boy had been born, Lady Beresford awoke one night to see her brother, Lord Tyrone, standing by her bedside. She had been surprised, believing him to have been almost 100 miles away.

Then Lord Tyrone explained. "I died last Tuesday at four o'clock and have been allowed to appear to you to assure you that you are to expect the birth of a son. He shall marry my daughter. Not many years after the birth of this son, Sir Marcus will die.

"You will marry again, but your second husband will make you unhappy. However, you will bring him two daughters and another son.

"This second son will be born late—when you are a 47-year-old. But you will never see him grow to boyhood . . . for you will die within the week after his birth."

Lady Beresford had thought it was all a dream and said so to her brother's spirit.

"Won't the news of my death be sufficient to convince you?" he said. Then seeing her hesitation, he added: "If I touch you, it would injure you irreparably."

"I do not mind a small blemish," she had replied. So the spirit touched her wrist, and in a moment the skin had shrunk up. Then Lord Tyrone's ghost vanished.

In the morning, Lady Beresford hid the scar on her wrist with the length of black ribbon.

"When I am dead," she told her friend, Lady Cobb, "you can unbind the ribbon and you and my son shall know I have told the truth."

An hour later, Lady Beresford died. Then Lady Cobb and young Robert Beresford lifted up Lady Beresford's hand, unbound the ribbon and found the wrist exactly as she had described it, with the touch of a dead man's hand quite clearly marked on the withered patch of skin.

THE PHANTOM MULE

Many celebrated psychical experts still steadfastly refuse to believe that "animal ghosts" exist—because they maintain that only man has a soul, and is, therefore, eligible for an after-life following death.

But so much evidence is currently being amassed, that this theory may soon be discounted for good. At least one responsible body—the British Society for Psychical Research—now firmly believes that some animals *do* return after death, in phantom form, to haunt their former surroundings.

Yet nobody has been able to explain why animals do return as ghosts, although in the majority of recorded cases, the ghost of the animal is said to accompany the ghost of a human —often a former earthly master.

But one of the strangest animal-ghost stories now being studied concerns the incredible materialization of a beast which contrived to appear at the very moment when its former owner was in vital need of help.

Molly Ransome, a stocky countrywoman in her early fifties, lived in the small village of Barburgh in the West Riding of Yorkshire. She had a market garden in which she grew flowers and vegetables and once a week took them to the market in the nearby town of Doncaster. She also made knitted garments at a prolific rate and these she sold at the market too.

Molly was regarded in the district as quite a character because of her great affection for a pet mule. Sometimes she could be seen riding it bare-back, other times she hitched it to a small cart that was barely big enough to hold her produce and herself, and went into Doncaster on market days.

Certainly there seemed to be a strange bond of companionship between Molly and the mule, and she invariably talked to it as they went along—and from the uncanny way the mule turned its head and twitched its ears, it appeared that the beast understood every word she said!

The mule was undoubtedly very old—it had been in Molly's family for as long as anyone could remember—and one summer morning in 1921, it finally died.

Molly went to the field to fetch the mule and it was nowhere to be seen. Greatly alarmed she hunted around and eventually found it, lying dead in a deep ditch.

For a long time, Molly was inconsolable, and there were those in the village with sharp-edged tongues who said she showed more grief at the passing of the darned mule than ever she had done when her old man kicked the bucket!

From then on, Molly trudged once each week to Doncaster market, taking her produce in a handcart. When somebody suggested she ought to buy herself another mule, she shook her head. "There'll never be another to replace him," she said, and there wasn't.

It was in late August, 1922, that the mule came back from the dead . . . Molly as usual, had walked all the way to Doncaster and that day she had sold everything she had taken.

Molly was well-pleased, and walked along the lane back to the village . . . until two louts sprang out upon her, brandishing sticks. They demanded her purse and threatened to beat her if she didn't hand it over.

Molly was not only tough and hard as nails, but she was afraid of nothing, and she was about to fight back, when suddenly a dark shape loomed in the road. It was late evening now, but not too dark for Molly to see that the shape that had suddenly and magically appeared as if from nowhere was . . . a mule!

Nor was it any ordinary mule . . . it could not be—and yet it was! It was her mule—the one she'd buried a year ago!

By this time, she had become a mere spectator of events, for the mule had trotted between her and the assailants and turning on the men, lashed out vigorously with its hooves.

For a while they tried to fight back, striking the mule with sticks, but neither dared approach too close to those killer-hooves, and finally they turned tail and fled down the road, pursued by their attacker.

Molly watched them disappear into the gloom. She waited, long after all sounds had died away into the distance—but the mule did not return.

When she told of her strange experience and swore that the ghost of her dead mule had suddenly appeared and saved her from being robbed people thought she was out of her mind.

But Molly stuck to her tale and reported the attack by the footpads to the police. Within a week the two men were apprehended.

In court, both swore that they had ill-luck since the night they had tried to rob an old woman and her mule had chased them off. . . .

One of the men, an out-of-work, laborer named John Franks, made a statement in which he said that he knew Molly Ransome, and had heard that her mule had died the previous year.

"But when this thing came chasing after us, I knew it was the one," he said. "I would recognize that vicious old brute anywhere. . . ."

TO LET—A HOUSE OF TERROR

There's a house in Hunt Street, Farnborough, that nobody wants. It's a fairly modern house, too, as it was only built in 1937 . . . yet the owner gave up trying to sell it many years ago.

The owner, Frank Baker, has even offered to rent this house at a very nominal rate, but still the house stays empty. And there is a very good reason for this, because to the local people it is still regarded as the House of Terror.

The last tenants were strangers in the district, who were only too pleased to find such a well-built house available at so low a rent. Rather than look a gift horse in the mouth, they moved in.

This was in October, 1961, and for the next 14 months the Knott family had no reason to suspect that their house was any different from the other houses in the street.

Nothing unusual happened, until it was decided to have the water pipe system renewed.

On the day following the completion of this job, Mrs. Knott returned from her local supermarket, went into the house—then stared about her in horror. Her carpets, wallpaper and furniture had all been ruined by water.

The plumbers who had just finished fitting in new pipes were urgently called back to trace the source of the damage, but they could find nothing wrong with the pipes.

Two days later exactly the same thing happened. Another inspection of the water system still showed nothing wrong. But the water engineer was astonished to find that the main water supply had been turned off—and was still off—hours before the soaking occurred.

That evening, Mrs. Knott heard a crash from the dining room and rushed to find her nine-year-old son, Raymond, lying on the floor with blood flowing from the side of his head. On the floor lay a broken flower vase.

Raymond told her tearfully that the vase had just flown off the table and hurled itself at him. Mrs. Knott thought he had broken the vase himself, but was afraid to confess. So she sent him to bed as punishment.

The following days were full of incidents. Windows slammed shut during the night, chairs crashed over in empty rooms, invisible feet clattered up and down the stairs. And whenever the house was left empty, the family returned to find water everywhere.

The Knott family were still determined to stay, but they soon changed their minds . . . when a sudden fire destroyed most of the curtains and carpets, and mysterious fires started all at once in several cupboards.

Before the Knotts finally left that house, they experienced flooding 127 times and insurance companies refused to insure the contents of their home.

A municipal inspector was appointed to investigate the house. He did not believe in the supernatural and was convinced the answer had had something to do with the water system.

He just couldn't *believe* the stories about mysterious fires,

flying vases and invisible feet, so he checked the original building plans—and found attached to them several pages of notes.

But even after reading them—and learning that one builder had dropped dead on the site, another had died in mysterious circumstances before the house was completed, and a third went mad—the inspector decided that all that was needed was a new water system.

By then, however, it was difficult to find workmen willing to do the job. But after promising a bonus, several workmen agreed to lay new water pipes and install new water tanks. But everything went wrong. Each day when the men arrived for work, they found what they had done the *previous* day had been damaged.

At first they blamed the local children and a watchman was employed to guard the house at night. But he only stayed a few hours, because he claimed that the house was haunted. He had heard invisible feet clattering down the stairs, and what was more, he kept "smelling something burning. . . ."

A psychic investigator was called in and he reported that the house was being haunted by a poltergeist, probably the spirit of one of the original builders who had died on the site.

Clergymen have tried to exorcise the spirit, but still the mysterious flooding continues.

Now the house is falling into a state of disrepair . . . and plans are being made for it to be demolished if a tenant cannot be found by April of this year.

THE GHOST SAVED HIM FROM JAIL

William Haywood, a 240 lb. building worker of Dunstable, England, can rightly claim to be the only man in British legal history to have been saved from a jail sentence because his home was haunted by a ghost.

He had been arrested by the police and charged with

using a car on the highway while banned from doing so by another court.

Not only did he plead guilty to this charge, but admitted to having no insurance, no license and refusing to give the police his name and address when they stopped him during a routine check.

The Magistrate, Mr. Devey, told Haywood during his trial: "These are extremely serious offenses. You've been in trouble before on driving charges and it is about time you were taught a lesson. You will go to jail."

The attorney representing Haywood put in a special plea before the sentence was passed.

"I realize my client deserves in a way to be sent to jail," he said, "but there are special circumstances. You see, he lives in a 200-year-old, haunted house. His wife is expecting a baby, and she is by nature normally a very nervous person. But since the ghost has been appearing daily since the Haywoods moved into the house several months ago, she has become terrified. My client was rushing home in a car because a neighbor had telephoned him at work saying that his wife had seen the ghost again, and this time had become hysterical and attempted to get rid of the ghost by holding Holy Communion in the house, but the attempt had failed."

Mr. Devey believed the story and told Haywood: "Instead of going to jail you will pay a fine and be banned from driving for 4 years."

After he had paid his fine, Haywood received a message from the Magistrate, inviting him to his chamber so that Mr. Devey could learn more about the ghost which was making legal history.

The Haywoods had moved into their home in February, 1965. They did not think it strange that the former owners had only stayed two months before putting the house on the market again. Certainly no one had mentioned that the house was haunted.

The following day their arrival, Mrs. Haywood was in an upstairs room tidying and cleaning. Suddenly she felt that she was not alone, and turning around, saw a man standing

there, dressed in old-fashioned clothes. But within seconds he had disappeared.

When telling her husband about the incident a short while later, she described the man as being about 50, of medium build, with gray hair. His clothes, she thought, were in the style of a century ago. They comprised a dark suit, and a stiff, white collar with a gold stud in it.

The next day, William stayed at home with his wife, but no ghost appeared. Nor did it the following four days.

On the fifth day, at around six o'clock in the morning, William decided to get up. Standing at the bottom of the bed he saw the ghost, exactly as his wife had described him. And as on the first occasion, the ghost suddenly disappeared.

The Haywoods decided to visit their local priest and ask his advice. It was then that the priest revealed that the previous owners had also done the same, and he had in fact held not one, but several services in the house in an attempt to rid the ghost.

He promised to try again, and arrangements were made for the following day.

Meanwhile, the couple decided to move their bed downstairs, but were kept awake all night by what seemed to be foot-treads in the bedroom above.

Next day, as arranged, the priest arrived at the house and a service was held. From then onwards, the Haywoods were never to see their ghost again, but several times each day footsteps could be clearly heard coming from the upper rooms.

Through the priest, the Haywoods were able to trace the former tenants and learned that they had finally fled from the house when the ghost took a dislike to two pictures that they wanted to hang on the walls in the bedroom.

Within hours of the pictures being securely fixed to the wall, the couple found that in both cases the glass had been smashed.

During the weeks that followed the ghost showed his displeasure by making frequent appearances during the day,

and by very loud footsteps at night, making it quite impossible for any mortals in the house to sleep.

They decided to put up the house for sale, and instructed one of the local real estate agents to do this on their behalf.

Although the Haywoods have tried to discover from local records who their ghost might be, they have been unsuccessful. All that was confirmed was that all previous tenants in the past thirty odd years had never stayed for more than three to four months.

Both William and his wife have got used to the footsteps, and the former takes great delight in first telling any strangers about how he escaped going to jail through a ghost, backing his story up by producing a batch of well-thumbed press clippings.

THE WOMAN WHO WEPT FOR 200 YEARS

The tall house with the elegant gables is still standing in the copse about ten miles from Nantes, along a road leading to St. Nazaire. It's been there for almost 500 years, but for the past 80 years it has been falling into gradual decay.

It was empty in September, 1915, when the First World War was raging all across Europe. Then a French artillery regiment decided to use it as their headquarters.

From the very first minute the troops moved in disaster struck. As a handful of armed, alert troops inspected the house to make certain that there were no enemy booby traps, one of them was shot by a colleague.

The two men were down in the cellars, probing around the debris of boxes, timber and old furniture when they first heard the strange noise. It was like somebody moaning . . . then a sound like fingers scratching on metal.

The soldiers, suspecting a trap, split up and converged on one corner of the cellar from different directions. Then a strong draft swept through the place and, blowing out their candles, plunged the room into darkness.

Suddenly a shot rang out—and a body crashed to the ground. When the rest of the troops rushed down the steep

stairs with lanterns one soldier was lying dead, while the other was standing over him with a smoking rifle. . . .

At an inquiry a few days later, the accused, a Private Francois Toutain told his officers about the noises they had heard and how he had shot his comrade by mistake.

A few days later, a third soldier, who was positioned on the roof as an observer for directing long range artillery, suddenly left his post. walked to the edge of the roof and leaped deliberately down onto the flagged courtyard 50 feet below. There was no reason for his suicide.

When an officer was found shot dead with his own revolver a few hours later, the commanding officer began to suspect there might be saboteurs or enemy agents hidden in the house, and he had the place scoured from attic to cellar.

It was in the cellar that the iron door was discovered—a huge wide, heavy, looking door made from cast iron, it had been set in the solid rock on which the house was built.

Obviously it had been there for a great many years, as the whole thing had practically rusted into one solid lump of iron. There wasn't the slightest gap between the door frame and the rock, either.

The strange thing about it was that there was no handle or even a keyhole on that door, yet it was firmly sealed. The massive hinges had been welded so severely to the iron frame that they could not be prized away.

It seemed unlikely that anybody could be using the doorway as an access point into the house, but the chance could not be overlooked. So orders were given for a watch to be kept on the door, while an attempt to open it was planned for the next morning. . . .

During the night a group of armed men lay hidden in the cellar, watching the doorway. But it never opened as much as a fraction of an inch . . . yet there was something behind it.

For shortly before midnight, the soldiers distinctly heard a sound behind the door. It was like a man sobbing with fear and desperation, then sounds like fists beating on the door panel from the inside . . . and finally of nails clawing against it.

They reported their discoveries to their officers, who began attempting to open the iron door. Painstaking searching revealed no locks, or hidden springs. It was decided to try to burn through the iron with blow torches, but that failed.

Then somebody suggested drilling through it and laying in small charges of dynamite. But hours later, when they had drilled in for more than four inches they still hadn't bored all the way through.

When that part of the operation stopped, the moaning could be heard louder than ever. Anxiously—as small charges of dynamite were laid in the holes—the troops were afraid to blow the whole door in for fear of killing whoever was behind it.

But that dynamite wasn't powerful enough, for when the dust settled after the explosion the door was still standing as impregnable as ever. And the sounds of the creature imprisoned behind it could still be heard.

A surprise counter-attack by German troops shortly afterwards threw the French line back for a few miles and the artillery regiment were ordered to retreat . . . leaving the mystery of what lay behind the iron door still unsolved.

However, when the German army took possession of the place, they heard the weird story from a French dispatch rider they had captured. And they were so intrigued by the tale that they decided to investigate the matter for themselves.

With typical Teutonic thoroughness a young officer from an engineering factory was sent along to the house. His name was Bartholomew Hauer and he was an explosives expert, who had worked as a miner in America before the war.

Hauer succeeded in blasting the door from its hinges—and as this happened, a loud scream rang around the cellar. It came from the room behind the door.

But when they entered the dark, evil-smelling cellar there was nobody there. The place stood like a graveyard, with the rancid odor of decaying flesh . . . and hanging from the walls were lengths of strong chain. Attached to the chains by iron collars were the mummified bodies of five women.

The sixth chain had been snapped from its anchor pin,

and the naked body of a golden-haired young woman was lying just behind the door, the missing chains still fastened to her neck and her hands stretched out beseechingly towards the door.

Her fingernails had been ripped away, while the blood-stained prints from her fingers were still black and clear on the inside of that iron door where she had clawed at the solid iron mass, trying hopelessly to find a way out.

From the appearance of the bodies, the German troops supposed they had only been dead for a few months. But medical officers who examined them were satisfied that the bodies had been preserved within the airless cell for at least 200 years.

Yet both French and German soldiers—members of opposing powers—had distinctly heard sounds behind that door. What else *could* they have heard—but the heartbreaking sobbing of a girl who had been seeking freedom for 200 years?

THE PHANTOM BIRD OF LINCOLN'S INN

One evening in 1913 the peaceful atmosphere of Lincoln's Inn, in London, was violently shattered by a terrified scream. It was the sound of a man in agony—the awful, mental agony of a human being who has been driven beyond the limits of human endurance.

The Inn is one of the Inns of Court in London, where many eminent barristers and judges still have their chambers. It's the very heart of Britain's calm, unruffled legal system.

But as the cold February wind blew the bare, bleak branches of the trees to and fro across the flickering gas lamps, it had suddenly become a place of fear.

A group of men—two porters and a cab driver—were startled from their evening chat in a doorway and stared up at a lighted window. It was the chambers of a well-known barrister who had just won the most successful court case of his career.

The screaming—a never ending, nerve-shattering sound—was coming from there, and the three men could see a man's

shadow against the lighted window as it battled savagely with some unseen attacker.

The porters rushed up the stairs to the lawyer's chambers and forced the door in. But they were too late, for the man was lying across the floor sobbing . . . and they knew that his mind had snapped.

In the next few months these particular chambers acquired an evil reputation. The clerks and valets who moved about the place whispered among themselves about the "feeling of evil" which they could sense there—especially late at night. Often they had been frightened by movements in the shadows of the hallway—movements which sounded like the faint beating of powerful wings.

But they kept their knowledge to themselves, for they knew only too well that the legal mind is hardly the sort which is impressed by superstitious fears. Then another lawyer moved in.

He was an ambitious, talented advocate who had been educated at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford, and seemed every inch the brilliant young man of the twentieth century.

But on the evening before he was due to appear at the Old Bailey to defend the man accused of what became a sensational murder trial, he was found hanging in his dressing room. A jar of talcum powder had been spilled below his slowly swaying body—and clearly visible there was the print of a gigantic bird's claw with immensely powerful talons. But there was no bird in the room; the doors had been locked and the windows closed.

The background to both incidents was hushed up, but when the next few barristers who occupied these chambers left hurriedly and sought accommodation elsewhere, the whispers leaked out to Fleet Street.

Soon the journalists were all over the place and as Lincoln's Inn Fields is practically on Fleet Street's doorstep, they sensed a story somewhere—especially as they were goaded on by the hints and vague rumors which were spoken about in the restaurants and hostelries frequented both by journalists and barristers.

Then Ralph Blumenfeld and Sir Max Pemberton, two of

England's most famous editors, heard the story in a Fleet Street club and became interested.

They arranged with the landlord of the chambers to give them the use of the room for one evening. Then they had all the furnishings, carpets and curtains removed.

A naked electric light bulb lighted the two connecting apartments, the windows were shuttered and securely bolted, and so was the main entrance leading in from the hallway.

Then shortly after 11 o'clock, Sir Max Pemberton and Ralph Blumenfeld settled themselves down to wait for something to happen. As they'd brought along two folding chairs, a card table, and a pack of playing cards, they sat down to play two handed bridge.

Once they had settled down, a reporter sprayed the floor around the room with a finely powdered French chalk until it was almost one inch deep. Then he left them alone, locking the main door behind him.

The first hour ticked slowly past and nothing happened. The two men sat silently beneath the stark glare of the naked light and played cards.

It was nearly midnight and nothing had happened. There was a full bright moon shining outside and the night was almost uncannily still to the men sitting by themselves in the silent chambers. The only sound was the rustling of playing cards.

Then a nearby clock boomed out the twelve strokes of midnight. That was the witching hour, the time when the supernatural was supposed to come to life. Blumenfeld smiled wryly across the table at his friend as the last stroke of the hour throbbed into nothing.

Pemberton smiled back at him and sighed with relief. "Well, we might as well finish our game, Ralph, before going home."

But at the very instant Ralph Blumenfeld gathered the cards towards him, it happened with a sudden unexpectedness. The main doorway crashed open with a reverberating clatter, the windows which had been bolted and shuttered threw themselves open wide—and the chambers were plunged into pitch darkness.

A gale-like wind roared through the hallway, filling the place with an evil, sickly stench and something gigantic *flew* into the room where they were playing cards.

There was a rapid beating noise above them as if a huge bird had flown in with the wind. Neither man moved a muscle . . . they dared not even breathe as something dropped lightly onto the floor, then swept past them to a corner of the room.

In the moonlight—for a second as their eyes grew accustomed to the dimness—they both saw a large, bulky, misshapen body disappear through the wall.

Then the foul stench gradually faded away . . . the roaring wind ceased, and the lights came on again. . . .

A few moments later, they heard footsteps rushing up the stairs from the street outside. It was their reporter with a press photographer. They had heard the shutters flying open and seen the rooms plunge into darkness.

All four men stared in astonishment down at the floor which had been so carefully covered with the powdered chalk—because from the middle of the room, and going directly into a far corner, were the enormous claw marks of a gigantic bird—a bird that took six-foot long strides and then vanished through a solid wall. That was all.

For some reason, the building was demolished shortly afterwards and a new set of chambers were built on the site. But nobody has ever said anything about these being haunted. At least, not yet.

TWO STRANGERS SHARED AN AWFUL SECRET

They were both complete strangers—two people out of the more than eight million who are living in London. But on November 7, 1967, they discovered that they had both shared a strange and frightening secret.

Unknown to each other, they had both foreseen a train disaster in which 53 people were to die. It started several days before the actual disaster, when they both reported their weird premonitions to their doctors.

Alan Hencher, is a 44-year-old Post Office worker from Dagenham, and Lorna Middleton is a dancing teacher in Edmonton . . . yet at the very same moment, on the very same day, they had identical visions. And they "saw" the Hither Green train crash, in which over 50 people were killed and 139 seriously injured. It was the worst rail disaster England had experienced for more than ten years.

Lorna Middleton was working in the kitchen of her tiny flat, in North London, when it happened. She'd been tired after a hard day's work when, as she bent down to pick up the mop from the floor, she felt faint.

Grabbing hold of a chair she straightened up, and realized that there was a gray, impenetrable mist clouding over her eyes . . . and a slow throbbing in her ears. For a moment, she thought it was just a dizzy spell.

Then ever so slowly, the thick fog started to drift away . . . and Lorna Middleton found herself looking along a railway track. Coming quickly towards her was a train.

Somehow she had the impression that the station in the background was London's Charing Cross . . . and realized that the passengers crowded into the carriages were heading for disaster.

She found herself trying to shout out a warning to them, but she was unable to move or speak. The the train went roaring past her, and out of sight. . . .

When she recovered, she was sitting on a kitchen chair, clutching the mop, and her hands were trembling as they had never done before . . . while her forehead was damp and warm with perspiration.

The next morning she went to see her doctor, who told her to write down everything that had happened to her—and all that she had felt.

Lorna Middleton did this, then her doctor posted it off to a Harley Street psychiatric specialist for his attention. The psychiatrist was surprised—not at Lorna's description of her dream, but because he had received an identical one forwarded by another doctor! This one was Alan Hencher's premonition. . . .

Almost a month before he had his vision of what proved

to be the Hither Green crash, Hencher had prophesied *two* train disasters and a plane crash near London.

All these things were recorded in the first week of October, 1967, in Alan Hencher's handwriting, verified by his family doctor, then passed to the Harley Street consultant. For professional reasons, the consultant must remain anonymous . . . but he has confirmed each premonition as having taken place.

A few weeks before the Hither Green catastrophe on October 26, an Iberian airline Caravelle jet line crashed in the Sussex Downs, less than 60 miles from London, and almost 40 people were killed.

In Mr. Hencher's letter, written almost three weeks earlier, he had described the plane and the location of the crash in vivid, minute detail. Then came the Hither Green disaster.

On the Sunday evening of November 7, Alan Hencher had been working on the night shift at London's Victoria telephone exchange. Suddenly he was seized by a blinding headache, rushed along to the sick bay, clutching a piece of paper in his hand on which he'd scribbled some words.

By the clock in the sick bay, it was 10:15 P.M. and Hencher's note described a train crash which should have taken place an hour earlier. True enough, the Hither Green train had crashed at precisely 9:16 P.M.

And there was no way that Hencher could have known this, as a thorough investigation later revealed. . . .

The psychiatrist who has studied both cases, states that in Miss Middleton's premonitions of world events, which have been passed to him for several years, she has been amazingly accurate in more than half the instances.

"Both Miss Middleton and Mr. Hencher are absolutely genuine," he has said. "There's no mistake about that. Quite frankly, it completely baffles me."

In fact, this doctor has hundred of similar cases on record, and each one has been checked by him and a team of medical and psychiatric investigators. The evidence that they are accumulating points to the fact that people *can* experience premonitions of disasters.

Somehow, suitably sensitive types—as well as other people in rare incidents—can either in their sleep or when awake

"crash through a time barrier . . . and see the wheels of disaster churning over before it has ever happened. Sometimes, even though the patient is hundreds of miles away—he can see the disaster at the moment it takes place."

But out of all the patients the doctor is studying, Alan Hencher is the most psychic . . . the one who experiences the most uncanny premonitions. A few days after the Hither Green disaster, Hencher's second forecasted train crash took place.

It was only four days after the Hither Green disaster and Hencher suddenly became faint again at work. This time he hurriedly scribbled down a note about "cattle on the line . . . train coming . . . people in danger . . ."

And again it happened just as he had forecast earlier. For hundreds of miles away in Sicily an overnight express train was hurtling along tracks beside the sea.

It was a dark night filled with patches of fog . . . and suddenly the driver saw a herd of cattle break through a hedge and wander onto the line. He slammed on the brakes—the locomotive bucked like an angry horse and sprawled across the adjacent tracks.

A few seconds later the Milan-to-Palermo express came thundering down and crashed into the derailed coaches. . . .

It was a freak accident, and Italy's second train disaster in just two weeks. 13 people were killed and 70 passengers seriously injured.

But it happened exactly as Alan Hencher all these miles away in London had predicted it would . . . and it had also happened at the very moment he fainted.

It is because of premonitions by people like Hencher that some British psychiatrists are suggesting that computers should be used to program these premonitions of disasters. Even if they can't be prevented . . . at least it could give the authorities an early warning of what to expect.

But if these computer ideas worked—*could* disasters be prevented? Or must we always accept our fate as inevitable. . . .

THE CASE OF THE STUBBORN GHOST

When the Reverend Maurice Frost died on Christmas Day, 1961, it cast a shower of gloom over the small village of Doddington, near Oxford, on what should have been a happy occasion. Few things ever happened in the village unless he organized them, and anyone becoming ill could rely on a visit from him to cheer them up.

His hobby for a great number of years was collecting books and antique clocks. He would never visit a neighboring village or town without spending several hours browsing through old antique shops to pick up the odd volume or time-piece that appealed to him. It was a well known fact that he spent much of his day in the vicarage reading his books and winding up his clocks. He insisted that every clock, irrespective of its age, should tell the correct time.

He was regarded by the many who loved him as being as fussy as an old hen over his prized possessions. He was also known for something else—a typical, characteristic quiet cough.

His heir, a Mr. Jarrett, moved into the vicarage the day following the funeral, and within hours of his arrival, received notice from the staff, two women and a man, that they were leaving immediately. They told him that the vicarage was being haunted by Maurice Frost. There was no mistaking his quiet cough. And it had been heard many times over the past few days.

Mr. Jarrett persuaded the staff to remain with him for at least a few more days. He would like time to investigate the matter and, if possible, do something about it.

He received his first shock in the library. Someone was removing books and changing them around in the shelves. And he knew that none of the vicarage staff ever came into the library.

It was the cook who pointed out to him the fact that without exception, all the antique clocks were still ticking merrily away, as they had done when the Rev. Maurice Frost had been alive.

And she knew, that unless Mr. Jarrett had been winding them up, no member of the staff had done so. . . .

Despite the fact that neither he nor his staff had seen the ghost of the former vicar—Jarrett was now convinced that he *was* there, so it came as no surprise to him when the staff again handed in their notice and left together that same day.

Jarrett, being a sensible and intelligent man, realized that something would have to be done to make it clear to old Maurice Frost that his time on earth was finished, and that he should now be content to go on his way, adjusting himself to his new spirit life, and transfer his great affection to the treasures he had stored up in Heaven away from the treasures he had left behind on Earth.

Also he was convinced from what he had heard from the villagers that Maurice Frost would have been the last person on earth to have wanted to inspire fear and despondency in the household staff.

How could he persuade the former vicar to abandon his lingering affection for his former earthly treasure? He consulted his new friend, the local doctor, and together the two men grappled with the problem.

It was the doctor who came up with a possible solution. He thought it quite unlikely that Maurice Frost would want to stay in the vicarage if his antique clocks and well-loved books were removed from the building.

Jarrett visited the homes of the three servants who had resigned because of the ghost, and they agreed to help him dispose of the books and clocks. A large moving van was hired to take away the late vicar's possessions, and as the final item was loaded on board, the four felt the atmosphere inside the vicarage change.

The ghost of old Maurice Frost had taken the hint, realized that its time was up, and gone on its way.

THE SPECTRAL CHILD OF AMBERLEY VICARAGE

As the newcomers to the picturesque village of Amberley, in West Sussex, the Reverend George Carr and his wife Louise couldn't have been expected to know everything about its ghosts . . . especially those that haunted the vicarage—because until they arrived there in 1902, nobody else had actually seen the ghosts. Though the villagers had always disliked the beautiful Jacobean house, they didn't know why. It was simply that there was "something not right about the place."

Then the vicar and his family noticed the curious way in which their dogs behaved. For a start the animals were always reluctant to go anywhere near the kitchen late at night, but whenever they did, they appeared tense and nervous.

As for the going *into* the room, that was something which almost sent them mad. For they would prowl around the kitchen on stiff legs, their tails between their legs, snarling and growling uneasily as if expecting something to attack them.

Then the vicar's children started to talk about the little girl they'd glimpsed from time to time wandering about the garden. This stranger always wore a white dress and had long fair hair, but whenever she saw the vicar's children she ran away into the orchard and hid.

And then there was the "funny old man." When the vicar questioned his daughters about *this* stranger, the children replied that sometimes he could be seen angrily chasing the girl in the white dress. Sometimes, too, he even reduced her to tears by shouting at her and threatening her with his cane.

The Rev. Carr was rather annoyed by this, for he thought that strangers were intruding into his home. But when he questioned his servants, who lived locally, or his parishioners, nobody knew the child or the old man.

Then several times late at night the vicar or his wife heard a child pattering about the rooms upstairs. Sometimes,

too, they even heard her giggling softly to herself. Thinking that one of their children was perhaps roaming around the house, they would go to find her. But there was never anybody there—and their own daughters were always fast asleep.

One evening, when Mrs. Carr had been reading a bedtime story to her daughters and they had dropped off to sleep, she heard the nursery door open. She didn't bother to look around, thinking that it was her husband. Then she heard the soft patter of a child's bare feet scurrying across the room. She looked around; the door *was* open, but there was nobody there. Both her daughters were fast asleep right before her eyes, yet when she stood up she heard a little girl laughing excitedly to herself from behind the curtains.

But once again, there was nobody there. There *couldn't* have been another child there.

After a few weeks, the Carr children stopped talking about the girl they saw and the old man. The haunting seemed to cease, too. And by the summer the weird incidents were forgotten.

Then, one hot summer's afternoon in May, when Mrs. Carr and a friend were sitting in the garden dozing lightly in the sun, they both heard the gate open and they both heard footsteps crossing the gravel driveway.

Then they both saw the little girl, about seven years old, in the white dress walking shyly up the drive toward the front door carrying a parcel. They were unable to see the child's face, for she kept her head bowed shyly as she passed them, and her long fair hair concealed her features.

The little girl walked up to the front door, rang the bell and entered the house when the door was opened for her by somebody inside the house. Supposing that it was one of the village children on an errand, neither of the women bothered to investigate the matter any further. About half an hour later, they saw the child leaving without the parcel.

A few minutes after that, Mrs. Carr's housekeeper brought out afternoon tea to the ladies, and Mrs. Carr asked her what the child wanted. "What child, ma'am?" The housekeeper asked, quite plainly puzzled.

"Why the little girl who took that parcel up to the house, of course," replied Mrs. Carr. "We *both* saw her delivering it—and somebody let her into the house."

The housekeeper denied all knowledge of the incident. So did the other servants and the vicar himself, who had been working in his drawing room just beside the front door. He assured his wife that nobody had called there that afternoon, that nobody had rung the front doorbell—and none of the servants had answered it.

For the next few years, these strange incidents kept taking place, always when there were some members of the Carr family present. On several occasions visitors to the house saw the ghosts, too.

But the strangest thing of all was that none of the villagers ever saw the ghosts. One day in 1903, during a fete in the vicarage garden the vicar saw a young girl in a white dress—exactly like the ghost described to him so often—walking through the crowds with an old man.

The two strangers were holding hands and chatting together, as they looked about at the stalls and amusements. Wondering who they were, the Reverend Carr watched them walk into the orchard together.

He decided to speak to them, but they disappeared behind the vicarage. He was only a matter of seconds behind them, but when he turned the corner they had vanished.

It wasn't until 1904 that any explanation for these materializations was discovered. The vicar had decided to have his house enlarged by extending the dining room for several feet. When the outside wall was being demolished to allow for the extension, the workman found a cupboard which had been bricked over from the inside.

There were a few moldy old books in the cupboard, some pipes and a tobacco jar. Then when they prized up the boards in the bottom of the cupboard they found the skeletons—the remains of a woman and a small child, aged about seven years old.

It was eventually discovered that the woman and the girl had been poisoned and hidden beneath the cupboard over 150 years earlier.

Nobody was ever able to establish who they had been or who had murdered them, because about the time they had died, records showed, the vicarage had been a private house which had been rented out to various tenants. However, one of them had been a man named Trevor Doyle. A local newspaper published at the time had carried a story about him, in which it said he had been a retired tea broker from Peking. The newspaper report was about the strange disappearance of his housekeeper and her daughter.

After the bodies were discovered beneath the cupboard, some inquiries were made into the character of the long-dead Doyle, but it has never been discovered who he really was or what happened to him.

THE HEADLESS WOMAN

When Ray Fuller went to spend a holiday with some friends who lived near Canewdon, in Essex, he certainly didn't claim to have ever seen a ghost. In fact, the psychical sciences were something he had never even thought about.

Yet before that long, Easter weekend in 1934 was finished, Ray was to have experienced his first–and–last meeting with a ghost. It was a terrifying encounter, too, for the ghost he saw had no head. . . .

Before arriving in Essex, Fuller had never heard abut the specter that was locally known as the Headless Horror of the Seawall. And although many other people had seen it, Fuller's description was so accurate that it is all the more incredible.

It was late on his first evening in Essex, when he was strolling toward the River Crouch with another Londoner who was with the house party. They were both young men and they were discussing a football match they had seen a few weeks earlier.

Then they saw an old woman walking along the narrow path towards them. Obviously they would have to step aside to let her pass.

As she drew nearer, they were both astonished to see that

she was wearing old-fashioned clothes–a crinoline and a poke bonnet. Both Fuller and his friend swore later that when they first saw her, there seemed to be nothing at all unnatural about the woman. She looked solid and real and Fuller remarked jokingly that she must have been going to a fancy dress party.

It was not until she came closer to him that he suddenly realized that she was not walking . . . but floating. Her feet were about two feet above the road surface!

Both young men felt an urgent impulse to turn and flee from the spot, but before they could the woman was upon them–and in that terrible instant Fuller remembers feeling some mysterious force lift him right off his feet–and both men were hurled away from the path.

As she swept silently past, Ray Fuller's horrified eyes stared at the bonnet . . . and he saw that there was no face . . . and *no head!*

He learned afterwards about the legend of how on nights when it is dark and there is no moon, the ghost of a woman rises up from a grave in the old churchyard at Canewdon, walks slowly to the west gate, and then makes its way down the country lanes to the river bank . . . where it suddenly vanishes with a terrible scream.

Those who have been unfortunate enough to encounter this specter, have always recalled that the ghost was only seen at certain points along the route. And these spots came to be avoided by the local Essex people.

An investigation into this ghost suggested that it once stopped its awesome haunting activities for at least half a century. And all who had seen it agreed the ghostly walk always terminated at the river's edge, for it is believed that ghosts cannot cross water.

So it came later as a surprise, when the ghost woman was seen a few years ago in the lounge of the Old Ferry House–on the opposite side of the river!

Here the ghost was reported to open and shut windows, and creep into empty beds, breathing heavily from the headless gap beneath the bonnet.

But Ray Fuller was so intrigued by his encounter with it,

that he made some inquiries, and learned from a 90-year-old village woman that it was the ghost of a witch. About two centuries earlier, the witch had been executed. But before that she had seen her house pillaged of its valuables by two sailors, who then fled across the river to Burnham-on-Crouch.

Perhaps she is still seeking her revenge on the two robbers who have long since died. . . .

WRITTEN IN BLOOD

Outside the night was dark and a hard frost was covering everything in sight with a smooth white dust. It was the weekend just before Christmas, 1901, and Brian Thomas, a young solicitor from London, had come down to Virginia Water, in Surrey, for the weekend.

Late that night he was sitting by the fire in the village inn smoking a pipe and reading a newspaper when something attracted his attention. There was a face staring in through the frost-coated window . . . a white, frightened, strangely familiar face.

Thomas dropped the newspaper and sprang to his feet, as the man looked appealingly at him. Then as Thomas hurried towards the door, the face disappeared, and by the time he reached the courtyard there wasn't a soul to be seen.

Puzzled by the incident, the solicitor called the landlord and explained what had happened. The other man shook his head and said it was impossible, there couldn't have been anybody there.

"That section of the yard's closed off at night, sir, and my dog would soon let us know if there was anybody prowling about." Nevertheless, the landlord agreed to have a look around with Thomas, but as they went outside they heard the dog.

It wasn't barking. It was howling—the long, drawn out blood-chilling wail of an animal in fear, and they found the powerful mastiff huddling in a corner with its tail between its legs. But there was still no sign of anybody.

Brian Thomas sat up for a long time that night wondering

what it was that he had seen at the window . . . and what had frightened the dog. It *had* been a face, he was certain about that . . . and it had been a familiar one. Almost like somebody he hadn't seen for a long, long time.

Slowly the memories came tumbling back into his mind. It had been the face of his old school friend Graham Purdy . . .

Purdy and Thomas had been very close friends all their lives. They'd played together as children and then gone on to public school together, where they'd become even closer.

Like many other boys before them, they had sworn eternal friendship in the traditional schoolboy manner, by pricking their fingers and mixing their blood. Then the blood brother bond had been finally sealed by signing their names in their own blood on a piece of paper, on which they'd both promised that whichever of them died first would appear to the other at the moment of his death.

Brian Thomas smiled to himself at the memory . . . and wondered what had happened to Purdy, for when they'd left school Thomas had gone to study law, while the other boy had joined the army.

Somehow, after that, they had lost touch. Their letters had become fewer and fewer, as Brian studied hard and Graham's army career took him to the furthest outposts of the British Empire.

It was that which helped Brian Thomas decide that he must have imagined the face at the window. He went up to his bedroom, reminding himself that he came to Surrey to have a rest after several weeks of hard work and long hours.

Yet even in the comfortable peacefulness of the inn bedroom he tossed and turned fretfully, unable to close his eyes. After a while he decided that it was the moonlight that was to blame, for by then the moon had risen and was well into the sky. While its clear beam was reflected strongly from the thick frost, Brian Thomas rose from his bed and went to the window to draw the curtains shut.

Then he gasped. For the scene outside wasn't that of the little country courtyard . . . it was of a railway track leading into a tunnel set in some weird, foreign looking mountainous

country. As he stood there staring with surprise, a train came hurtling out of the tunnel.

In one of the carriages he could see a young English officer battling singlehanded against three hooded native thugs as they were trying to push him through the window of the express train. The soldier was fighting for his life—and he was fighting well . . .

But he was soon overpowered. And just as the carriage was level with Thomas' window, the soldier was hurled out through the doorway by his murderers.

As his body crashed onto the track, Brian Thomas saw that a dagger had been plunged into the soldier's chest . . . and as he lay there dying he kept muttering something to himself over and over again.

By then the picture had started to fade away, but as it did Brian Thomas heard the voice growing louder and louder. He realized that the soldier was calling *his* name. He realized also that the young officer he had seen murdered had been his boyhood friend.

At that a wave of shocks went over the young lawyer and he crashed to the floor in a faint. Next morning he was roused by the landlord bending anxiously over him with a glass of brandy.

"I—I must get back to London," muttered Brian. "I—I haven't been well. I've been seeing visions. That face yesterday . . . and I saw somebody being murdered last night—out there in the yard."

The landlord was so shocked that he agreed with Brian. Yes, perhaps he should return to London . . .

He spent the rest of the weekend resting in his own flat, and by Monday was fit and well enough to return to his office and deal with his work. Just when he decided that the whole thing had been caused by strain and overwork there was an incredible sequel.

Walking home from his office, along the Strand, he met Graham Purdy's father. The meeting seemed such a remarkable coincidence after his visions about Graham, and he hadn't seen the father either for several years. He

stopped to greet the older man and then noticed how distressed he seemed.

"I've just heard today that—that Graham's dead," said James Purdy in reply to Brian's questions.

Brian Thomas stared at him for a second. Then burst out, "Do you know *how* he died? Was he killed? I mean, was his body found by a railway track? I'm sorry, but I must know. And if I'm right, then I'll tell you what happened to me."

It was Mr. Purdy's turn to look astonished. "Yes, it happened in India exactly as you've said. But how do you know? I only received the telegram this morning."

As they walked along the Strand together, Brian Thomas explained how Graham Purdy had twice kept a promise they had made together as schoolboys.

"THE SMOKER" IN THE BLIZZARD

The blizzard suddenly screamed down from the east and ripped across the lonely, snow-bound hills of Labrador. It caught two Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers in its icy grip, sending razor-edged particles of snow whipping into their faces.

Soon, George Bateson and Ed Riopel were completely lost in a howling white wilderness. Hopelessly, they trudged on behind their laboring dog-teams, facing almost certain death from exposure when darkness fell. There was no shelter and the ice began to form on the men's eyelids causing snow-blindness.

Suddenly, the crack of a whip sounded above the roar of the blizzard. Out of the whirling murk a dim shape materialized: the figure of a huge man, dressed in snow-white furs and driving a team of white dogs.

The Mounties shouted at the tops of their voices, but the man just raced past, then wheeled away into the driving snow. Desperately, the policemen plunged after him, realizing that this was perhaps their only chance of survival.

For two hours the policemen followed the mysterious stranger, pushing their dogs to the limit in an effort to keep

up with him. At last, through a lull in the storm, they saw an isolated outpost.

A curtain of snow swept across their path again, and when it lifted the white-clad stranger had disappeared. At the end of their strength, Bateson and Riopel stumbled towards the comforting glow from the cabin.

As they thawed out over a fire, the policemen told a group of trappers what had happened. They wanted to know who their guide had been, so that they could thank him.

The trappers looked at each other in silence. At last, one of the older men took his pipe from his mouth and said: "It was the Smoker who brought you in, but you'll never be able to thank him for it this side of eternity. He's been dead for close on thirty years."

It seemed too incredible to be true. Was the weird stranger who had saved the lives of Bateson and Riopel that day in 1949 more than a figment of their imagination? There are over 1,000 men who have reason to believe so, for the Smoker's ghost has become a legend in Canada.

Before his death, the Smoker's real name was Esau Dillingham, and from 1910 until 1920 he was one of the most notorious characters in Labrador.

The nickname "smoker" means someone who brews illegal liquor. For six years, Dillingham had manufactured a potent brew from spruce cones, sugar and yeast, which he peddled up and down the territory. For Dillingham, the trade proved highly profitable—but a lot of people who drank his brew went blind or raving mad.

The law finally caught up with him in 1916. After drinking too much of Dillingham's "moonshine", some trappers started a knife-fight and one of them was killed. The Smoker was sentenced to a year's imprisonment in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Prison didn't cure Dillingham. He took up his illicit trade again almost as soon as he was released—but this time, he was determined to escape the long arm of the law.

To camouflage his movements across the snow-covered countryside, he made himself a suit of white fox fur and ermine, and acquired a team of fourteen white dogs. He was

chased by police several times, but each time he simply merged with the snowscape and vanished.

The Smoker's base, and his illegal still, was located in a wood, and the area was surrounded with deadly, concealed bear-traps that could crush a man's leg to a pulp.

He was arrested only once, in 1919. After two days of questions and threats, the police were forced to let him go through lack of evidence.

A few months later, the Smoker kidnapped a man for ransom, but when the money didn't materialize, he forced him to drink his moonshine until it drove him mad.

After that, the Smoker began to drink his own brew—and it proved to be his downfall. One day, while fighting drunk, he picked an argument with an Indian and broke the man's neck with his bare hands.

The police were really out to get the Smoker by then—but they were too late to bring him to trial. In the winter of 1920, he broke his back in a fall and died in a police station on Frenchman's Island.

When he knew that he was dying, Dillingham did something he had never done in his life before. He prayed.

"Lord, I know I've been wicked, but I don't want to go to hell. Let me drive my team across this land until the end of time, so that I can undo the wrongs I've done . . ."

They buried him the following day. It was the end of the Smoker—or was it?

One night two months later, a trapper reached the shelter of Frenchman's Island during a blinding snowstorm. He said that he would never have found the place at all, if he hadn't followed the tracks of a "big man dressed all in white furs." But no one else arrived on the island that night . . .

Since then, hundreds of trappers in Labrador—hard-headed men, not given to superstition or wild imaginings—swear that "the Smoker" appeared to lead them to safety when all seemed lost.

THE SKELETON HAND POINTED TO A KILLER

The village of Fairhaven was being pounded by a fierce gale one night in March, 1902, as the last bus from Berwick trundled through the deserted, rain lashed village High Street. There was only one passenger on board.

For most of the journey he had kept himself to himself, sitting as far away from the driver as he could, and apart from paying his fare to Fairhaven from Berwick, he'd said nothing at all.

Then he left the bus at a stop a few yards from the local inn and made his way to the saloon bar. It was a gay, noisy, cheerful atmosphere inside the saloon, but as he stood at the end of the bar sipping his drink, the stranger ignored the conversation which was buzzing around him. He looked at nobody, until the landlord behind the bar, mentioned the dreadful weather outside to one of the regulars.

"The last time I remember such a storm," said the barman, "was the night that old oak tree blew down."

"Oh, that *was* a storm, then," agreed the customer. "I'm not surprised that skeleton they found there seemed so terrifying . . ."

That was when the stranger looked around. "What was that? You—you mentioned a skeleton!"

For a second those who were talking to the landlord were startled by the harshness of the stranger's voice. Then the landlord said: "It's rather a long story, but I've kept a souvenir . . . do you see that hand up there in the glass case? Well, that came from the . . ."

His voice died away because the skeleton hand had swivelled around in its case and was pointing at the stranger. And the man was staring at his own hand which was dripping with blood, although there was no cut or wound to be seen.

Then the stranger looked wildly about him, at the horrified faces which were staring at him. "Send—send for the police. My name's John Scott . . . I'm the murderer!"

And so the crime which had shocked the whole of Britain

for almost ten years was finally solved—the death of Mary Morrison . . .

About 70 years ago Mary had been a very beautiful girl, who lived in Fairhaven with her mother and sister. And not surprisingly, John Scott, who had worked in Fairhaven then, fell in love with her and they became engaged to be married.

Then Mary fell in love with somebody else and broke off her engagement to John Scott. She was very upset by Scott's jealousy and did her best to keep his friendship. She even invited him to her wedding, but Scott refused to attend.

On the morning of the wedding, Ellen Morrison, Mary's sister, heard a rustling noise in the garden. Looking through the window she saw a man lurking about in the shrubbery, but when he saw her at the window, he ducked out of sight.

"Ellen thought that it looked like John Scott, but she couldn't be certain . . . so she didn't say anything about the incident to her sister.

Then later that same day, when the two girls were preparing to dress for the wedding ceremony, somebody brought Mary a note which had been pushed through the letter-box.

Mary read it, looked distressed, then asked Ellen to leave her alone for a few moments. "I'll call you when I'm ready," she said.

But half an hour later, when the carriages were at the front door, Mary had still not appeared. Ellen knocked on the bedroom door, but there was no answer. There was no sound at all from the room and the door was locked from the inside.

Frightened by this, Ellen called to her mother and some neighbors. The door was forced open, but there was no trace of Mary.

Then somebody found a white rose lying on the garden path; it had come from Mary's wedding dress.

For the next few days a massive search went on for the missing bride, but Mary Morrison was never seen again.

The note she'd received was found in her bedroom. It was from John Scott, a sad, despairing note in which he

begged to see her for a "few moments in the garden, before the wedding."

The police discovered that he had disappeared from the district, too, and finally it was assumed that they had run off together.

Within a few years, Mary's mother died, and the man she'd been going to marry was drowned at sea. Only her sister Ellen remained in Fairhaven.

One winter's night, there was a terrible storm and one very old oak tree near the village blew down. When the workmen came in the morning to clear away the fallen timber and rubble left by the storm, they came upon a skeleton of a left hand, on the fourth finger of which was an engagement ring with a ruby.

Further search revealed the rest of the skeleton, around whose dried-up bones some rags of clothing still adhered. The ruby ring was identified by Ellen Morrison as her sister's engagement ring.

When Mary was given a church burial, Ellen kept the skeleton hand with the ring preserved in a glass box. But when Ellen died not long afterwards, the house was sold, and turned into an inn. The new landlord kept the gruesome hand on display and it became a popular topic of conversation among the regular customers, as well as other visitors.

No one really knew what had happened to Mary—until the night John Scott came back . . . and *his* hand dripped blood. That was when the rest of the sordid story was revealed.

Scott confessed that he'd met Mary outside her bedroom. In an argument he had struck her, and she crashed her head against the stone edge of the window ledge. The blow killed her.

In terror and remorse Scott had fled abroad and stayed there until an over-powering urge led him to revisit the scene of his crime.

He was committed to the county jail, where shortly afterwards he died, before any trial could take place.

FROM "OUT OF THE BLUE"

It was at seven o'clock on the warm morning of September 21, 1937, that the first stone fell from nowhere. The sky was a cloudless azure blue over Port Louis, the capital city of the island of Mauritius—yet a half-pound pebble crashed down from the sky.

A fourteen-year-old Creole girl, who was nursemaid to South African author Cappy Ricks's children, was crossing the backyard of the house when it thudded into the ground in front of her. For a few moments, the child stared in horror. She realized that if she had taken one step more it would have killed her. Then, screaming with fear, she fled into the sanctuary of the house.

At first her employer blamed the incident on some local vandals, and warned his servants to look out that none of them were injured. However, he assured them, that it wasn't very likely to happen again.

But during the day more than 40 stones of all shapes and sizes came crashing down all around that house. Each time eye witnesses swore that they came "from out of the sky," and there was never anybody around who could be blamed.

The next morning, however, Cappy Ricks had more cause for concern. Not only did a similar bombardment start at the same time in the morning, but one of his neighbors noticed that the stones were of a sort not found in that part of the world.

One of these was about seven inches long, with a roughly circular hole near its thinner edge. In the days that followed that shape was to become quite familiar.

The police were called in and two of them remained about the house all day. One hid in a tree, with binoculars, and kept watching the land all around the house.

Despite that, stones continued to fall spasmodically all day, and he saw nobody who could have thrown them. Then Ricks noticed another amazing thing. Although all the doors and window were closed, many of the stones fell *inside* the house without breaking a single pane of glass!

As on the previous day, the hail of missiles ceased at nightfall. Next day, the fusillade started again. In an outside bathroom, Ricks himself was struck on the shoulder by a 6½ lb. rock.

Ricks was astonished to realize that it must have entered the room through a six-inch opening in the fanlight. He was even more astonished to see one of the stones crash down on a thin china plate without even cracking it!

Ricks sent his wife, family and servants to stay with some friends a few miles away. While inside the house the author, a police sergeant and two constables kept watch. And more stones fell during the afternoon.

Then came the frightening news that stones had started to fall on the house where his family was staying. In desperation, he moved them to another house, but the stones followed and smashed up the veranda.

This struck another terrifying note, for the previous stones had caused hardly any damage.

When the family moved to a hotel, a few stones followed them there, but it was nothing compared with those around the bungalow. However, on that third day over 300 missiles had rained upon it, including the one with the hole which had already been thrown out into the courtyard on the previous two days.

In the afternoon, the children's nursemaid returned to the house and started washing some clothes. Shortly afterwards, Cappy Ricks and a policeman both saw a large stone rise of its own accord and make straight towards the girl. The policeman cried out to her—and the Creole girl ran away screaming.

The next morning, the author gathered up fourteen stones that had fallen that morning, put them on his bed with a note for the police sergeant who was calling at ten o'clock. After thoroughly searching and locking up the house, he left for this office.

Not long after he arrived, he was called to the phone and was told that pandemonium had started in the house shortly after he left. Police had broken in and found the dining room almost a total wreck. All the damage had been caused

by the same stones that Ricks had left in his bedroom.

The communicating door had been closed, but the stones must have traveled horizontally by way of a window recess common to both rooms. Everything on the table and sideboard had been smashed to pieces; so had the clock, the hanging lamp and the furniture in the dining room.

In the bedroom, wardrobe doors—which were perfect fitting and had been left locked—were found wide open, although nothing was missing.

Then the hotel proprietor, although friendly towards Ricks, insisted that he remove his family at once.

With a heavy heart, he did so, but when they all arrived back home, over a thousand sightseers had gathered around the house. These were soon dispersed by police, and with the crowd went the children's nursemaid. She never returned—and not a single stone ever fell afterwards!

No malevolent influence ever manifested itself again toward Ricks and his family, or to the Creole nursemaid, once she left their service.

It seemed to the South African that some force had asserted itself in order to drive the girl away. But what that force was, and by what means it was able to wreak its vengeance he was never able to understand.

THE GHOST OF A MURDERER—AND HIS VICTIM

Though it was already Spring, a cold Atlantic wind swept in over the south coast of England. In their rooms at Itchells Manor in Hampshire, the guests huddled beneath their bedclothes and blessed the young housemaid who crept into their rooms throughout the night and heaped coal on the fires.

For Margaret Smilie it was a back-breaking and thankless task which kept her from her own bed in the servants' quarters. But she was a conscientious girl, and in 1909 a housemaid didn't question the orders which the mistress of the house had given her.

In one of the rooms she visited, the fire had burned

low, so she put a log on the grate and knelt in front of it trying to coax some life into the embers with hand-bellows, humming softly to herself as she worked.

But the singing was soon to stop. For young Margaret, eighteen years old and too level-headed, investigators subsequently decided, to imagine things in the night, found herself plunged into a nightmare excursion into the paranormal.

She was just putting some small pieces of coal on to the fire when she was startled to hear the sound of banging.

The sounds seemed to be coming from somewhere close. They continued, in series of three or four knocks at a time, sometimes slow and measured, sometimes quick. Margaret stood up, a puzzled expression on her face. It was after midnight, and she doubted that anybody in the house would be making such odd sounds. As she studied the huge chimney-piece, the weird rapping began again. By now, she was certain that the noise was coming from the left side of the fireplace and a little above her head.

Though she was normally sensible and unhysterical, she felt a sensation of fear—as if her blood had suddenly turned to ice.

She tried to tell herself not to be silly—to snap out of it. Then, suddenly, she caught one foot in the hem of her long dress and stumbled, putting out a hand to save herself from falling. As her hand touched the back of the mantlepiece, the tapping started again and she felt the bricks beneath her hand vibrate!

Quickly she turned to hurry out of the room when she heard a frantic cry, in a man's voice, that seemed to come from the fireplace.

"Let me out! Let me out!" the voice demanded. Immediately, Margaret dropped her coal bucket and ran screaming from the room.

The noise brought the other guests from their rooms—and amid the excitement some of her courage returned. But when she stopped to lean for a moment against the bannisters she was suddenly conscious of something pushing past her. At the same time, she clearly heard a voice crying in anguish: "Oh my God! Oh my God!"

As she fainted, and one of the Lefroys—the family that owned the manor—caught her and it was at this point that every single guest in the house saw the heavy front door suddenly open of its own accord and then, a moment later, slam shut again.

Seconds later, several of the guests heard the unmistakable sound of a carriage on the drive. The noise was so clear that Mr. Lefroy ran to the front door to open it and see who could be driving a carriage at that late hour. But he found that though he used every ounce of his strength he could not open the door.

Mr. Lefroy called for a crowbar to force the door, then realized that it wasn't, in fact, jammed. It had been locked, though the key was still hanging from its hook in the hall.

When Lefroy finally looked outside, he saw nothing . . . nobody.

Subsequently, he took the precaution of locking up the haunted bedroom and refusing to allow anyone inside. But some twenty years later another guest encountered the same ghostly sound—the weird banging behind the fireplace, the same cry to be let out—the impression of an unseen person hurriedly leaving the house, and then the sound of a carriage being driven away.

Purely by chance, the family later learned the tragic story that had led to the strange haunting of Itchells Manor.

Late in the 17th century, it emerged, a Squire Bathurst was lord of the manor. He married an Italian marchesa who brought up her son, Alexander, in such a way that he became more like her than his father, and prone to seek friends only among those of high social rank of great wealth.

He became a close friend of a youth named Robert Bushnell, the selfish and spoiled son of a wealthy father. Their friendship reached into adulthood, but it was always Robert Bushnell who was the dominant partner. Alexander gave into him for the sake of peace, knowing also the great advantages of having a rich friend.

Despite Squire Bathurst's disapproval the two young men went on a grand tour of Europe together, Robert Bushnell

paying all expenses. But the journey ended when Bushnell was drowned in Florence.

Alexander returned to Itchells Manor conscious that money was short and that he would be unable to continue the rich life he had been enjoying. But some time later, when both his mother and father died, he saw his chance to become wealthy overnight. Selling some of the estate land, he invested £8,000 in the South Sea Company.

In 1720, when the value of his investment soared, and offers of £1,100 were being made for every £100 of South Sea Stock, Alexander sold his shares and came out with a handsome profit—something like £90,000.

He invested two-thirds of this in East India Company Stock and went off to Italy. And when the South Sea bubble burst, he congratulated himself at his narrow escape from complete ruin.

Subsequently he returned to Itchells Manor, bringing his Italian valet with him. But the experience of the South Sea bubble had made him suspicious of any kind of investment and he converted his assets into cash.

He became eccentric—never going out, and keeping his money at the manor in huge chests. Some nights, the valet found his master counting his money on the floor. . . .

Soon the valet, Giuseppe Mancini, was quite sure Alexander was mad. He made his plans carefully, and one night he murdered his master, having first prepared a cavity behind the chimney in one bedroom. Here he hid the body and then bricked it up again.

He loaded as many money chests as he could on to Alexander's carriage but just as he was about to leave the manor, he heard his master's voice cry out from behind the fireplace: "Let me out! Let me out! . . ." Mancini ran down the stairs in a panic, out through the front door, crying as he went: "Oh, my God!"

He locked the front door behind him, and drove away as fast as he could make the horses gallop. But within a month, he was caught at Southampton, tried and sentenced to death.

In the death cell, he confessed his crime to a priest and

revealed how he had heard the voice of his master's ghost.

As he told the priest: "It is the just retribution of Alexander Bathurst's spirit . . ."

THE DEAD MAN'S CLUB

A student of one of the world's oldest and most venerated universities will go to bed tonight, blissfully unaware that he is sleeping in a room which was once the meeting-place of one of the most spine-chilling secret societies ever recorded in physical history.

From the stone floor in the angle of the cloister adjoining the hall of Jesus College in Cambridge he will climb the steep staircase that has been known to generations of undergraduates as Cow Lane.

At the top, he will open an old, oak door which leads to his room. And there he will sink into a sound sleep . . . if he is fortunate.

But the student who knows the history of the room and who still dares to sleep there on November 2nd is indeed made of sterner stuff than many generations before him. For this was the meeting date each year of the Everlasting Club . . .

The club was founded by Alan Dermot, the son of an Irish peer, and from the very beginning its intentions were openly evil.

A minute book, faithfully kept by the select members, is solid testimony to the existence of its strange ritual. Here are recorded rules and events which indicate, even to a sceptical observer, that this was intended to be a meeting-place for ghosts.

When the strange club was inaugurated in 1738, one of the rules allowed a member to continue to attend even after death. It stated: "This Society consists of seven Everlastings who may be Corporeal or Incorporeal as Destiny shall determine."

Once joined, there was no retreat. Another rule stipulated:

"None shall hereafter be chosen into the Society and none shall cease to be members."

Each member was obliged to be present at a meeting. A yearly gathering could be cancelled only if at least four members met in October and decided that no meeting should be held. In the absence of such a decision, the annual meetings "for entertainment" were held each year on November 2.

Morals during the first half of the 18th century were bad enough throughout England, but the behavior of the Everlasting Club scandalized even that age.

Dermot was idle, vain, cruel and wicked. He was regarded as the evil genius of the other six members, who were Charles Bellasis, the son of a noble family, Henry Davenport, Francis Witherington, James Harvey, William Catherston and Marcus Goldsmith.

On the night of November 2, 1743, the ghost of Davenport was at the meeting—the first to become an Incorporeal member. He had been killed by a cannon shot at the Battle of Dettingen—the last battle in which the British Army was led personally by the King.

The other members, when they met, had no way of knowing he was dead. The news could not have arrived in time—and yet the minutes for that meeting contained this written statement:

"Henry Davenport, by a cannon-shot, became an incorporeal member, November 2, 1743."—he died on the battlefield at the same time the other members were meeting in their club room!

The thought of one ghost among six live members—joining heartily in the drinking, singing and debauchery—makes the blood run cold. But this is, apparently what *did* happen.

Only if Davenport was there to inform them—attending, obeying the laws of the club, even after death—could that minute have been written.

The following year, the already incredible tale took an even more macabre turn. This time, there were *two* ghosts.

An entry at the top of the page recording the meeting for that year reads: "Alan Dermot, President at the Court of His Royal Highness." This was written in by Dermot and

signed by him—and yet, five days before the meeting, Dermot had been killed in a duel in Paris.

None of the others knew of the event. But certainly Dermot was there—seemingly in his normal earthly, human form, eating and drinking, cracking his wicked jokes—signing, in his known hand, the minutes book. But he was dead . . .

When the remaining five members realized they had dined with one ghost and a dead man who had seemed alive, they scattered throughout the country, meeting only once a year for the next five years to cancel the annual entertainment, according to the rules and laws of the club.

Then another member died. The four survivors continued to meet in October to make sure they did not have to hold the annual entertainment and face once more the ghosts of the others.

Then in 1766 more members died. Finally, only Charles Bellasis remained a Corporeal member.

For sometime he had been highly respectable. He was a Fellow of Jesus College; young men knew nothing of his past; older ones had either forgotten or forgiven him.

He decided he would defy the laws of the Everlasting Club. At the time he was living in the rooms at the top of the stairs in Cow Lane.

What exactly happened on the night of November 2, 1766, nobody knows. But witnessed somewhere near 10 P.M. there came from his room, a pandemonium of shouting and bawdy songs, loud blasphemies against God, the crashing of glass, loud oaths—and the sound of breaking furniture.

This went on for two hours. Knowing the previous history of the club, nobody dared to protest or even go near the rooms. Undergraduates trembled, the master fumed in his Lodge, porters and college servants shivered in their shoes.

As midnight struck, the ghostly sounds of revelling stopped . . . and the college slept uneasily.

The following morning, when Bellasis didn't appear, the door of his room was broken down. Inside workmen found seven chairs around the table; six were overturned . . . and, in the seventh, was Bellasis—dead.

In the minutes book was a final entry made the previous

night Each of the seven members had signed his name. . . .

No one dared ask how six dead men had managed to sign their names in the book. They were content enough to believe that this was the end of the Everlasting Club.

But was it? The room was locked up, and nobody took Bellasis' place the following year. Yet on November 2, 1767—exactly twelve months after the final macabre drama—the sound of revels came again from the room at the top of Cow Lane.

For the college authorities, that was enough. The door was sealed and nobody was allowed inside. Eventually, succeeding generations shrugged off the legend surrounding the room, reopened it and used it as a a storeroom.

But as late as 1920, the maniacal laugh of Alan Dermot resounded once more around the stone corridor.

That was the last recorded information of the Everlasting Club. But the undergraduate who sleeps there on a November 2 needs sounder nerves—and a shorter memory—than many others. . . .

THE MAN IN THE IRON COFFIN

The long, iron cylinder was first unearthed in the late spring of 1943 by American troops who were helping to clear a bomb-site in Liverpool. At first they thought it might have been an unexploded bomb . . .

When their mechanical excavator dug it up from the depths of the rubble, on the site of the Merseyside warehouse, an immediate alarm was raised and for 48 hours the streets were closed. Then bomb disposal experts examined it in detail.

Long, rusty and very old, it was a mysterious looking object. The experts decided that it certainly wasn't a German bomb, and tests carried out with instruments on the site revealed that it was simply a long tube, hollow in the middle and sealed at both ends with thick iron plates.

They didn't bother to open it, because it was not considered dangerous. Yet if they *had* prised the ends apart,

they would have discovered one of the most baffling mysteries England has ever known.

So the cylinder was left where it had been discovered—on the bomb-site.

Two years later, a group of local schoolboys was romping about with a ball when they re-discovered the cylinder now half-concealed by weeds. Curiously, the children gathered around it.

After being exposed to the weather for two years it was covered with rust and had started to corrode. One of the circular iron plates was beginning to peel away from the cylinder.

Twelve-year-old Tommy Law seized it, wrenched it away and peered inside. Then his eyes widened with horror—as the gleaming, white bones of a skeleton foot slid slowly out towards him.

Less than an hour later, the cylinder was lying on a bench in the mortuary. It had been carefully sliced in two with an acetylene torch, and the police pathologist, Dr. Vincent Harrison, was studying what was left of the body which was lying before him.

Couched on a thick bed of sacks was the skeleton of a tall, well-built man wearing a rotting high, beaver hat and well-cut Victorian clothing. The pathologist's opinion was that he had been dead for a long time.

But where had he come from, who was he, how had he died and how was he entombed inside that iron coffin?

A search through the pockets of the clothing revealed a bunch of keys, a signet ring, a tobacco knife and two diaries for the years 1884 and 1885.

In another pocket the police discovered a collection of papers, but they were unreadable, as they had become a solid mass of brittle, fragile matter.

Yet it was these papers that the police realized would hold the only clues to the mystery, so many weeks were spent softening the parchment and gently prising each single sheet apart, without ruining any possible writing.

In all there were about a dozen documents addressed to T. C. Williams, Limited, of Leeds-road, Liverpool. Through

them it was discovered that the owner of the company, Thomas Williams, had been threatened with bankruptcy in 1884.

Unable to face the shame of such disgrace in a highly moral Victorian society, Thomas Williams had vanished one night in December of that year, only a few weeks before his company's books were to be presented for public examination.

When no trace was ever found of him, it was finally decided that he had committed suicide. The discovery of the body in the cylinder over 60 years later, however, brought up a host of new theories. A postmortem and careful laboratory tests showed that suicide was practically impossible, for there was no sign of poisons present in the remains of Williams' body, if it was Williams.

The possibility of murder could not be proved, either, for after more than half a century there wasn't much left to investigate.

Yet there still remained the biggest question of all . . . what was the body doing in a sealed iron cylinder? And where did it come from? Even today nobody has ever been able to come up with the answer to either question.

The only theory is that Williams had been hiding from his creditors, had found the cylinder somewhere, and climbed inside.

The sacking suggests that he intended to shelter there for the night. Perhaps he was tired of running, perhaps he was cold, and wanted somewhere to sleep. But it was a sleep from which there would be no waking, for someone bad sealed him in.

His disappearance certainly wouldn't have caused too much of a hue-and-cry under the circumstances, because debtors in those days in Liverpool often disappeared easily and quietly. It was quite simple to board a ship, work their passage to a new life in America, and leave the shame of their past behind them.

All that Thomas Williams left behind him was the mystery of how and why he died . . . .

THE MIRACLES OF FATHER PIO

For countless centuries, the mystics of the Orient have professed mastery over levitation, telepathy, the art of seeing into the future, and astral projection. Now, Western scientists are gradually coming to admit that the laws of time and space can apparently be overcome by certain individuals, either consciously or unconsciously.

The threads of evidence are scanty, but when gathered together they form the beginnings of an irrefutable picture.

One thing is certain: there are people who seem to be able at will to "leave their bodies" and project their "doubles" through space, to appear many miles away.

Others are completely unable to control this astral projection. Sometimes, they just have the vague feeling that something out of the ordinary has happened—nothing more.

In November, 1917, during the First World War, the Italian Army suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Austro-Hungarian forces. The Italian commander, General Cadorna, had retired to his tent and was contemplating suicide. Suddenly a young monk walked in, laid his hand on the General's shoulder, and said: "Come, General, you must not dream of doing such a thing!" Then he disappeared.

After the war, General Cadorna heard of Father Pio, the priest who bore the stigmata on his flesh—the marks of the nails in Christ's hands and feet.

Cadorna traveled to southern Italy, to San Giovanni Rotondo, to meet the priest. To his astonishment, the General recognized the man who had appeared to him in his hour of distress. The holy man recognized him, too, and said: "You came through your trial very well, my son."

Although Father Pio several times demonstrated his power of appearing in two places at the same time, he never explained it, principally because the Church imposed a ban of silence on the mystical powers of some of her followers. That Father Pio had this power of projecting himself at will

there can be no doubt, for there have been many witnesses who have testified to it.

One such was Monsignor Damiani, Bishop of Salto in Uruguay, who made several trips to Italy to see Father Pio. Monsignor Damiani expressed the wish that he might die at San Giovanni, so that Father Pio could perform the last rites for him.

"No," the priest told him, "You will die in Uruguay. But I shall be beside you . . ."

In 1942, the Archbishop of Montevideo was awakened one night by a messenger who told him that Monsignor Damiani was dying. The Archbishop left at once, but it was too late.

On a table near Monsignor Damiani's death-bed, he found a scrap of paper. On it were just three simple words, written in the dying man's hand: "Father Pio came."

A few years later, in 1949, the Archbishop himself made a pilgrimage to San Giovanni. When he saw Father Pio, he was filled with wonder. For Father Pio was the mysterious messenger who had come to him that night in 1942, with the news that Monsignor Damiani lay dying.

It is quite possible that Father Pio might have been able to enlighten the scientists who were interested in his case, but he would never reveal his secret. He would only say that his mission on Earth was to bring help and comfort to those who needed it, and it was to this end alone that he used his miraculous powers.

"Father Pio," says Professor Douglas Hunt, who has made an intensive study of Eastern mysticism, "must have reached a high degree of mastery in the technique of meditation, on a parallel with the great Yogis of India. Through his faith, he acquired supernormal powers."

Faith is one way to bring about paranormal experiences, but it requires a lifetime of piety, meditation and asceticism. Today, science is attempting to shorten the process by the use of chemical agents. The technique itself is by no means new, as certain primitive peoples, such as the Mongols and the Mayas, knew of substances, mostly derived from plants, which induced a trance-like state of mind in the person consuming them.

Dr. Puharich, an eminent American biologist, tells of the strange experience of one of his patients, a businessman, whom he was treating with an unspecified type of drug.

As soon as he had absorbed the drug the man lay down. Suddenly, he had the impression of leaving his body and of hanging suspended over it, looking down.

At first, he put it off as a bad dream induced by the drug, but gradually he found that it was happening when he had not taken the drug at all, and moreover, his "double" began to journey far away from his sleeping body.

One day, during one of his "astral voyages," he met a couple of friends leaving their home. He followed them, and when he met them "in the flesh" a few days later, he was able to give them every detail of their movements that evening.

Dr. Puharich is convinced that some day, perhaps in the not too distant future, the key to the whole field of parapsychology will be found.

Just how, he does not know. But all over the world, governments are assigning top priority to psychic research—and already, discoveries have been made which are startling in their implications.

HAUNTED BY A GHOSTLY PERFUME

When the Purley family moved into their new home in Truro, Cornwall, early in 1950, the last thing they expected to find there was a ghost!

But they didn't realize this for some time, even though the strange, strong smell of lavender kept coming and going in a most mysterious manner. It would seep through the whole house, in the bedrooms upstairs, in the downstairs living quarters and even in the cupboards.

Sometimes it would appear all over the house; at other times it would be isolated in one part . . . even in one small corner. And there was no doubt at all that it was a lavender smell.

It certainly wasn't unpleasant, but the Purleys were so

intrigued, that they searched the house from top to bottom looking for some lavender bags which might have been left there by a previous tenant. They found nothing—there wasn't even any lavender growing in the garden which would explain the strange aroma.

There seemed to be no logical explanation for it all and the Purleys were completely baffled—so baffled, in fact, that after finding no cause for the smell, it began to irritate them. They set about examining every item of clothing and furniture, but the lavender perfume wasn't coming from these sources. Finally they began to scrub out the house.

Once that was done, they felt satisfied that they had succeeded—but to their astonishment all the scrubbing and cleaning did not have the slightest effect. The house was still smelling of lavender!

They made inquiries, becoming more and more puzzled by the strange and apparently ghostly scent that refused to be removed from the house.

Then they learned that a former tenant of the house had been an old lady, who had always carried lavender bags around in her handbag, pockets and even under her hat!

So the Purleys hunted around their home again, convinced that the former tenant had hidden bags of lavender somewhere. But even then they found no source of the smell.

Mr. Purley was about to suggest taking up the floor boards, in case there might be a secret hoard of lavender hidden there, when the ghost appeared in the living room one day as the sun was shining in through the windows!

The ghost was that of a very old woman and she walked about quite freely and was so startlingly clear they thought she was real. Her clothes were contemporary enough—the sort of dress they might have expected to see any old lady wearing.

She seemed harmless enough and gave them no cause for distress. She began to appear, after that first occasion, quite regularly, and not always in the same room.

Sometimes they saw her walking about upstairs, sometimes going up or down the stairs, and sometimes she would be in the kitchen.

And always just before she appeared that strong smell of lavender started to fill the house.

Always she seemed to be on the move. It was almost as if she was hunting for something in the house where she had quite recently lived.

The Purleys tried to think of some reason for the haunting, and wondered if she might be unhappy in her spirit life, unable to tear herself away from still-familiar earthly surroundings, unable to go on her way at peace in the other world beyond death.

Some neighbors suggested having the house exorcised, but the Purleys decided against it.

They began to study the old lady's ghost when it appeared—but they could not reach any conclusion that she appeared to be unhappy.

A physical investigator told them, "In her own simple way, this old woman was probably very happy here on earth. This house was her home and when she died she could not accept the truth . . . that she was dead.

"So she lingers on, naturally enough, in the same surroundings where she was once so happy. Undoubtedly one of these days she will move on—and when that times comes you will never see her ghost again. And she will take with her the smell of lavender that she obviously loved so much."

THREE TAPS ON A WINDOW AT MIDNIGHT

Jim Smith's strange experience took place at the beginning of June, 1940, when he went back home on leave after being wounded during the Dunkirk campaign. There is no doubt the he was mentally, emotionally, and physically exhausted after the ordeals he had just gone through. And it was suggested to him that what he experienced in his home, was caused by his exhaustion. This might have been an acceptable solution—if it hadn't been for the even stranger sequel.

On his first night home, Smith had an uneasy, restless

night. He was so tense and overwrought that he just couldn't sleep. Then in the early hours of the morning, just after midnight, Jim Smith realized that he was *not* lying in his bed.

Somehow, he had left his bed and was standing outside the house, being propelled towards the window by some weird force. Presently he was peering through this window into a room.

It was his own bedroom and he saw his wife lying there fast asleep.

As he stood there, Smith had a terrible conviction that his wife was in some imminent danger, and he had a desperate desire to warn her. But—about *what?*

At the same time he felt strangely impotent, unable to do anything about it—frantically his brain triggered off a call for action. But when he tried to hammer on the window to awaken her he found that he could not move his arms. Then a devastating fear consumed him—an awful feeling that he was failing his wife. It became an obsession with him to knock at the window to warn her of a danger he knew with absolute, blind certainty was there, but could not understand.

Then he saw her suddenly sit up, her eyes round with fear, her face shocked and deathly white as if she was aware of some threat.

She stared at the window, quite plainly seeing nothing . . . but obviously afraid that she *might* see something there.

Then Smith managed to lift one hand and tapped upon the glass three times. . . .

She heard that—because her eyes grew even wider with fear as she continued to stare at the window.

Then came the most astounding and horrible part of this man's testimony. Smith saw his knuckles at the window—and a wave of icy horror swept through him. For his hand was that of a skeleton, with the withered skin tightly drawn over the protruding bones.

Further horror came when he saw that his whole arm was just a long brown-tinted bone draped in moldering rags.

There came to him the sickening odor of foulness—the

stench of damp mildewy earth. Suddenly he realized that he was dead. . . .

Then he began to slip back, away from the window, away from the house. Back down to what he knew was his own open grave.

It was a nightmare—no more—but the terrible symbolism of the awful dream was tremendous. A ghost, rising from the grave, endowed with the will and mind of a living man, to give the ancient warning of impending death and doom to someone in the house. Three taps on the window with skeleton knuckles.

And sadly, not very long after this terrible experience was reported, investigated and authenticated, Jim Smith's wife committed suicide.

THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY GRAIL

The black crags and the wooded hillsides of the French district of Ardeche huddle around the rump of the Auvergne Mountains.

There is a brooding atmosphere about the district that even the passing traveler cannot fail to discern. Yet it may be that deep inside some cave or fissure in these dark, sad mountains, Christianity's most precious relic lies forgotten.

For at least two distinguished historians now believe that somewhere in the Auvergne Mountains lies the prize that for centuries man has sought in vain—the Holy Grail, the cup from which Jesus is said to have drunk during the Last Supper.

Over the past ten years, experts have been painstakingly reconstructing a jigsaw of long-forgotten facts, gathering together fragments of knowledge about the strange events which occurred in Ardeche nearly seven centuries ago, when it was called Languedoc, and an army of Crusaders marched across it.

Fleeing from them were the remnants of an Eastern religious sect known as the Cathari. They carried with them their treasure, a bulky bundle which no one has ever been able to either find or identify.

But now two historians, Professor Francisco Pacheco, and Dr. Hans Rahn, are becoming increasingly convinced that the treasure was the Holy Grail—that it was hidden somewhere in the mountains, and that it remains there to this day.

Physically, this part of Southern France has changed very little during the past seven hundred years. In the 13th century, Languedoc was an independent state stretching from Provence to the Pyrenees, with possessions as far afield as Tripoli.

Its sovereign, the Count of Toulouse, was so powerful that he was known as the King of the South.

In the previous century the south had been conquered by a new religion called the Cathari—The Pure Ones. According to its doctrine, there were two Gods, the God of Light, and the God of Darkness, who fought to gain mastery of the Earth. The doctrine was preached in Languedoc by priests known as Perfects.

In July, 1209, Pope Innocent III ordered a Crusade against the "odious heretics of the South." It was the start of one of history's most atrocious wars of extermination—it lasted sixty years and involved two Popes and three successive kings. When the town of Beziers fell to the Crusaders, seven thousand men, women and children were massacred.

By 1243, there was only one center of resistance left in Languedoc: the fortress of Montsegur, perched on a rocky pinnacle not far from Carcassonne.

To the Perfects, Montsegur was a holy place, it was here that 500 of them gathered to make their last desperate stand. On the plain below, 10,000 Crusaders besieged the fortress for ten months. When the garrison eventually capitulated, the Crusaders promised to spare the Perfects if they would renounce their beliefs.

They refused. They would, they said, rather burn than submit.

On the night of March 16, 1244, a huge bonfire was lit on the plain below Montsegur. A procession of 215 Perfects, all that remained, marched into the flames, singing hymns.

(Today, the place where they died is still known as the Field of Burning.)

As the funeral pyre blazed four men slid down the sheer face of the cliff below the fortress by means of a rope. Their names are on record: they were four Perfects: Hugo, Amiel, Aicard and Clamens. With them, they carried a heavy package—the treasure of the Cathari.

Just what the treasure was is something that has baffled historians for centuries. It was not gold or precious stones, for those had already been transferred to the castle of Usson, near the Spanish border.

It must therefore have been a religious treasure. But what?

Could it have been the Holy Grail?

Medieval chronicles report that after many tribulations the chalice was finally hidden in a mysterious castle called Montsalvatge, where it was entrusted to the care of "Parsifal, the purest of Knights."

After years of research into thousands of ancient documents, Professor Pacheco and Dr. Rahn now believe that the Chalice was in fact brought to the northern slopes of the Pyrenees by way of Spain and lodged in the secret temple of the Cathari.

They conclude that Montsalvatge was in reality Montsegur, and that Parsifal was none other than Tranceval, military leader of the Cathari.

"Furthermore," says Dr. Rahn, "historical texts state that the Grail was given into the care of Tranceval by Raymond VI, Count of Toulouse, during the 13th century.

"The medieval chronicles say that the name Parsifal means 'he who judges wisely'—and in ancient French, Tranceval means precisely the same thing."

Fact, fantasy, or folklore? Perhaps some cave in the Auvergne Mountains still lies waiting for someone, some time, to stumble upon the answer. . . .

THE FIRST TIME THE TITANIC SANK

Some authors write for posterity and others for fame and fortune. Morgan Robertson wrote to pay the rent. If he could do that, and buy himself a steak and a pint of beer on a Saturday night, he considered that there wasn't much wrong with the world.

For ten years, he had lived in two rooms on New York's West Side and written his thousand words a day.

Sometimes they were good, sometimes passable, sometimes mediocre—but there were always a thousand of them, and he could usually find a magazine or publisher who would give him a few dollars for them.

Morgan Robertson didn't expect to be remembered as a maestro of the written word, and he hasn't been. Instead, he has been remembered for giving a sneak preview of history.

In 1898, Morgan Robertson had a dream which so moved and horrified him that he wrote a novel about it.

It was not a particularly good novel, but it has become a classic of its kind. It told in uncanny and tragic detail the story of the century's most horrific sea disaster—the sinking of the steamship *Titanic.*

If it had been written after the event it couldn't have been more accurate. In fact, it was written fourteen years *before it happened* . . . at a time when not even the first girder of the *Titanic* had been laid down . . . when the name was still just a word in the dictionaries.

The name of the ship in Robertson's dream was the *Titan.* She was 70,000 tons and 800 feet long. So—give and take a few feet and a few tons—was the *Titanic.* She could carry 2,250 passengers, and so could the *Titanic.* And her end when it came, was as terrible in fiction as it was in real life.

Twenty years later, Robertson described his dream. "It was a wild April day and flags were flying and bands playing, and there was a bunting stretching from the ship to the dockside. It was a great ship, with four red funnels.

"It was certainly the largest and most imposing ship I

had ever seen. There was a great trumpeting of sirens, and as the ship moved away there were dark clouds overhead.

"Although everyone was happy, I knew something terrible was going to happen. I knew I should warn someone, but what can you do in dreams?

"In the next part of the dream, the ship was at sea. It was full of rich and complacent people. There was dancing and music. Great chandeliers shimmered and swayed, and an orchestra played. But the sea was getting rough and the wind was rising. I knew there was peril ahead.

"There was treasure aboard this ill-fated ship—perhaps it was pictures, perhaps treasures of great age. I knew they would be lost.

"In my dream, I called out to the captain to decrease speed, but he didn't. Then an iceberg speared into her steep black side like a great fang, and there was a terrible sound of breaking metal and people screaming and crying.

"I woke up then, and I couldn't sleep for the rest of the night."

So, Morgan Robertson, always the professional, took out paper and pen and noted down the outline of the dream. He remembered the displacement of the ship, its length, and color, and he knew the Captain's name: it was Smith.

A year later he found the notes. The terror he had felt in the dream had long since evaporated. He saw the notes only as a framework for an adventure story.

It took him two months to write. He called it *Futility,* and sold it to a publisher in Boston. He got a check for one hundred dollars and treated himself to an oyster supper and a seat at the opera.

Then he got on with some other project and forgot all about *Futility.* And everybody else did, too. It sold a few hundred copies and was reasonably popular in the lending libraries.

In 1912, the *Titanic* sailed on its maiden voyage to the United States. Robertson read in the papers of the preparations for its departure, and at first wondered why the story seemed vaguely familiar. Then he remembered *Futility.*

It couldn't happen . . . or could it? He felt he should *do*

something but the moment he tried to decide what he could actually do, his resolution left him.

He could hardly telegraph the White Star Line and say: "Cancel the *Titanic*'s maiden voyage—I had a dream about it fourteen years ago."

So he did nothing, and as in his dream, the great ship sailed steadily and relentlessly to its doom.

In every basic detail, the stories of the *Titan* and the *Titanic* were identical. As in the dream, there were not enough lifeboats on the vessel for the vast number of passengers on board.

But no one cared, because the *Titanic*—like its fictional counterpart—was absolutely unsinkable.

The real ship carried "treasure" too—a priceless copy of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. And in both cases, the rich and influential had precedence over the tourist passengers when lifeboats were allocated.

In both cases, the architect of the ship went down with his dream . . . and the orchestra played hymns until the water closed irrevocably over their heads.

It was a wild April night when the *Titanic* went down. There was dancing and music. But the sea was getting steep and the wind was rising. The captain on the bridge looked out over the grim rollers and was unafraid of their brooding menace, for the *Titanic* was unsinkable.

But she sank . . . at a point in time when the past met the future . . . when the dream of Morgan Robertson was transformed into cruel and spine-chilling fact.

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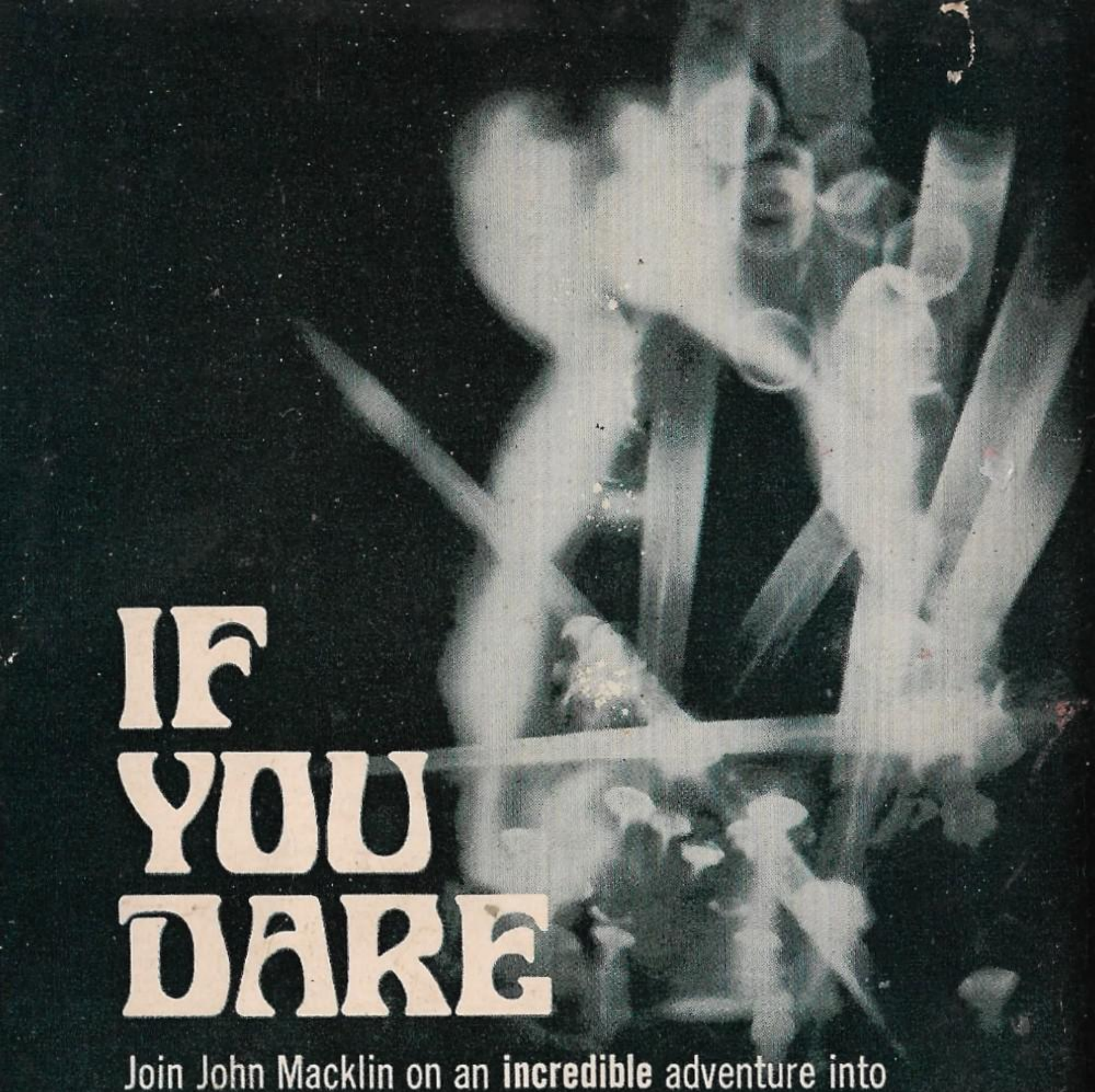

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